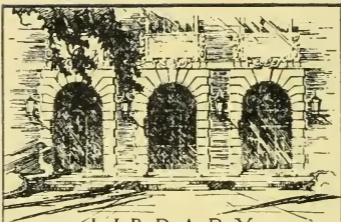


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Rear Admiral Halkett





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FATHERLESS FANNY;

OR,

THE MEMOIRS

OF A

LITTLE MENDICANT,

AND

HER BENEFACTORS.

A MODERN NOVEL, IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY *MRS. EDGEWORTH*,
AUTHRESS OF "THE WIFE; OR, A MODEL FOR
WOMEN," &c. &c.

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FATHERLESS FANNY,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER XII.



Astonishment.

“YOU have elucidated a mystery,” said Fanny, “that has tormented me a long time; but I cannot say you have done it in a satisfactory manner. Your artifice can answer no purpose whatever but to exasperate your guardians, disgust the Duke, and render me ridiculous, or even more than ridiculous; for it will be supposed that *I* had some part in

the plot ; and, rest assured, if that be the case, it will make me more wretched than any other circumstance possibly could."

"Never fear, my-dear Fanny," replied Miss Stanhope, "the Duke is too far gone to think about prudence now ; I have watched him, and I am sure he would as soon part with his life as with the hope of marrying you. As I said before, had he known who you were at first, he might have consulted prudence, and avoided the society of a person so dangerous to his peace ; but now it is too late ; he has had frequent opportunities of observing that your beauty is the least part of your powers of pleasing ; and he has expressed himself to me in rapturous terms of those mental charms that are to form the happiness of his future life, when he is

united to 'the most lovely of women.' Those are his own words. When people have imagined the Duke was making love to me, he was entertaining me with *your* praises, little madam. Am I not a good girl to listen to them without envy? and from the mouth of a lover too!"

"You have done me an irreparable injury," replied Fanny, "by making me act a part in this drama, although without my concurrence."

"How so," asked Miss Stanhope: "surely it is no injury to lay a plan for making you a Duchess."

"You do not think becoming the Duchess of Albemarle comprises much happiness," said Fanny, "or you would not reject the offer yourself."

"You are pleased to be sharp upon me," answered her friend; but you

ought to recollect, my dear, that I don't *like* the Duke."

"Neither do I," rejoined Fanny. "By your own confession, you acknowledge that had his Grace supposed me to be the portionless creature I am, his *prudence* would have taught him to avoid me; and yet you suppose me mean enough to take advantage of the infatuation of his senses, which, by the bye, I do not believe in, and become a Duchess at the expence of my delicacy."

"Your silly scruples about delicacy and nonsense will ruin every thing," said Miss Stanhope in an angry tone, "these high flown romantic notions do very well in the heroine of a novel, but positively they have not common sense in the strait forward every-day occurrences

of life ; surely to a girl who has no dependance, but on the bounty of her friends the opportunity of marrying so advantageously ought not to be slighted."

"Your ideas and mine are very different upon this subject," replied Fanny indignantly ; "nothing ought to be considered advantageous to a woman that militates against her delicacy, and *poor* and *dependent* as I am, I would not abate one single grain of that nice feeling to become an *empress* ; these are my sentiments and I trust now you *know* them you will at least respect me so far as to forbear mentioning the subject to me any more,"

"I have done," replied Miss Stanhope laughing, "but here comes one to whom the interdiction does not extend I hope?"

As she spoke, the Duke of Albe-
marle entered from the garden.

“ I am punctual,” said he, looking
at his watch, and addressing Miss
Stanhope, “ tell me, my charming
friend, that I am welcome ?”

“ To *me* most welcome,” replied
she; “ but for that young lady,
pointing to Fanny, I cannot answer
so well as I flattered myself I
could.”

“ The visit of the Duke of Albe-
marle to Miss Stanhope, can want
no concurrence of mine,” said Fanny,
“ I will therefore retire.”

The Duke seized both Fanny’s
hands, as she rose from her chair and
made a motion to go.

“ No, by Heavens !” said he, I
have suffered suspence too long ; you
shall not now leave me, lovely incom-
prehensible, until an explanation
has taken place between us.”

“ That is right,” said Miss Stanhope, “ she has forbidden me to speak to her again upon the subject, but your Grace is a privileged person.”

“ Would to Heaven I were so,” rejoined the Duke.

“ Your Grace requires an explanation, of me,” said Fanny blushing, “ whilst I am unconscions how it is possible that I should have one to give you, there has been nothing mysterious in any part of my conduct since I have had the honor of being known to your Grace.”

“ Good Heavens !” exclaimed the Duke, turning to Miss Stanhope, “ what can this mean ?”

“ In pity to you both,” replied that giddy girl, I will do more than the laws of the land require of any body, *i. e.* I will accuse myself.

She then recapitulated the particulars relating to her plot already known, adding with a laugh, “like all other busy bodies, I have got *myself* into the worst scrape after all, and am likely to be thanked by nobody at last; for if your Grace be but as angry with me as my friend, Fanny, I have made a blessed piece of work of it indeed!”

“I must express my concern,” said the Duke “that Miss Stanhope, should have so far mistaken my character as to suppose any deceit necessary to induce me to act towards her with the liberality she is so justly entitled to. Had I been aware of your *plot* it would have saved me much pain, as I should not have told my uncle that Miss Stanhope was the choice of my heart, and the arbitress of my happiness; this Lady

turning to Fanny, has made it impossible for me to offer to any other woman the heart which is hers alone, and which henceforward depends for happiness upon her acceptance or refusal of its devotion ; but you, Miss Stanhope, who knows Lord Somertown so well, must be aware how difficult you have rendered the task of breaking to him a circumstance so opposite to his views and wishes, and of which he has not the most distant suspicion."

" On *my* account, my Lord," said Fanny, " I trust you will not incur any displeasure from your uncle, since however highly honored by your Grace's notice, I am so circumstanced, that it is utterly impossible for me to listen to your addresses ; my presence here is no longer necessary, as the mystery of which you

complained has been unravelled : and if you entertained any doubt of *my* sentiments, I trust they are for ever removed." So saying, without giving the Duke time to answer her, and before Miss Stanhope was aware of her intentions, Fanny darted out of the room ; and left her two auditors in a frame of mind not very agreeable to themselves.

CHAPTER XIII.

Reparation.

WHAT an unaccountable creature that girl is," exclaimed Miss Stanhope, as Fanny left the room, "who would have supposed a dependent creature like her possessed such a lofty spirit."

"I should," replied the Duke, "and if you had thought me worthy of your confidence, Miss Stanhope, I would have shewn you the falacy of such an experiment with a girl like Fanny. Good Heavens! that I should only be made acquainted with her worth, to lament the impossibility

of possessing her. You have ruined me, Amelia, for ever destroyed my peace of mind, and exposed me to the vindictive spirit of Lord Somertown without obtaining one advantage yourself; had you candidly told me at our first meeting, that you were averse to the alliance, I should not have led my uncle into the error that will render his wrath a thousand times more fierce when he finds that he has been deceived. And who knows, perhaps the lovely and innocent object of my affection may be the sacrifice first immolated upon the altar of revenge. Alas! I know my uncle too well to trust him with the fatal secret unless I were willing to devote the lovely Fanny to the dire consequences of his resentment.

“ Upon my honor, you frighten me,” said Miss Stanhope, turning

pale, " what a marplot I am, I will never attempt scheming again ; well I will do all I can to repair the injury ; the secret must be faithfully kept, and trust to me for the *denouement*, it shall be a happy one ; that is, unless Fanny be perverse."

" Forgive me," said the Duke, " but you have shewn yourself so unskilful at plotting, that I do not like to trust you without knowing what your intentions are, for if the secret be kept and every thing go on as usual, I see no possibility of avoiding the worst of all *denouements*, our ill-starred nuptials."

" Well to be sure, you are the politest creature that ever lived, to tell a lady to her face that the worst thing that could befall you, would be to marry her ; but I must take it for my pains, for I have deserved it, so now I will retaliate, that is the only

satisfaction left me. There cannot exist a greater antipathy on your side to the alliance than that cherished in my heart, an antipathy which is strengthened and increased by an attachment to another person ; it was the hope of making *you* the aggressor, in breaking off the treaty of marriage, that led me to the stratagem which has so completely failed : as thereby I hoped to escape the penalty attached to the delinquency, not that I intended to take the forfeit money from you, but merely to save my own, this mercenary view induced me to quit the path of truth, and wander in the trackless maze of cunning ; but now I renege the paltry scheme, and regardless of fortune or any other consideration have resolved to make reparation for the error I have committed ; leave it therefore to

me, and fearlessly pursue your accustomed attention, and proceed with the preparations for our expected nuptials, *I* will take care to render them impossible and to free you from the shadow of blame, I will not tell you my plan, because I have set my heart upon a surprise; but I repeat, you may safely trust me: I am now treading in the plain open path of generosity and honor, and can say with truth, that I am now *en pays de connoissance*, it was only in the region of cunning that I lost myself, for *there* I was a *stranger*."

"I *will* trust you," said the Duke, "although you have so cruelly misled me, for it is impossible to doubt the candid tale you tell; but remember, I will not dishonor my name or be stigmatised with the imputation of dishonourable dealing, therefore if I

follow your directions and go on with the *appearance* of a courtship our marriage is inevitable, unless *you* prevent it, for *I* will not act like a scoundrel even though *death* were the alternative."

"Fear me not," answered Amelia, "here is my hand as a pledge of my fidelity; I will not foil you, but lest the slightest idea of collusion should attach to you, from this minute we drop the subject, until it be finally decided; so now go about your business, and I will seek Fanny and try to soothe her ruffled spirit. She is a haughty little puss: I believe her heart's lined with buckram."

"Do not irritate her feelings, I entreat you," said the Duke, "she is exquisitely sensitive; and should she imbibe an idea that I presumed

upon the knowledge of her dependent situation, she will be lost for ever to me. You owe me this complaisance my dear Miss Stanhope, for you have placed my happiness upon a balance."

"I will attend to what you say," answered Amelia, "therefore make yourself easy."

The Duke now retired, and Amelia went to look for Fanny. She found her in her own apartment, whither she had fled when she quitted Miss Stanhope's dressing-room. A torrent of tears had relieved the oppressed feelings of her heart, and she was now more composed.

Fanny's spirit was naturally noble, and rose superior to the dependance of her situation. Whilst under the protection of Lady Ellencourt she

had not felt the mortifications to which her Ladyship's absence had now so painfully exposed her. Instead however of becoming servile, or endeavoring to conciliate the regards of her haughty companions, by that unvarying complaisance which generally distinguishes the humble companion. Fanny had become more reserved and assumed an air of dignity, which consciousness of innate worth could alone have supported. The Duke of Albemarle had appeared in her eyes exactly the sort of man she would have chosen, had she been entitled by rank or fortune to encourage his addresses, yet notwithstanding this predilection in this favor, she had persevered in receiving his attentions with a degree of coldness that would have convinced him

she was entirely averse to him, had he not been encouraged to persist by Miss Stanhope's assurances that it was merely the effect of a romantic determination to prove the sincerity of his passion to the utmost; the discovery of the deceit that had been practised under the sanction of her name, gave Fanny the most poignant regret, as the same delicate spirit that had made her veil her real sentiments under the appearance of indifference, whilst uncertain of his intentions, now sternly forbade the humiliation of marrying, clandestinely, the man who had been led to suppose she had laid a trap to ensnare his affections, and whose superiority if rank and fortune might fully justify a suspicion that ambition was the chief inducement.

“ Never !” said the noble-minded

girl, as she quitted Miss Stanhope's apartment. " Never could I receive the addresses of a man whose confidence in my integrity had been destroyed by the implication of artifice upon my character; no, generous Albemarle, I can now never listen to your vows, and although my heart overflows with grateful tenderness for the partiality you have honored me with, the die is cast, and I can never be yours! doomed to conceal within the aching boundary of my own bosom, the sorrow that consumes me, I shall gladly retire into the country, where at least the restraint that now holds every feature in bondage, may be dispensed with, and I may weep unquestioned and alone!"

Such was the soliloquy that had employed the mind of Fanny, before

Amelia came to disturb her. The lively girl began to rally her pensive friend with her usual vivacity, and made use of every argument her ingenuity could supply her with, to prove that she ought to receive the Duke's addresses with complacency, although she could not deny that for the present at least those addresses must be *clandestine*.

“Enough, my dear, Amelia,” interrupted Fanny “that single proposition overturns your argument; nothing clandestine *can* be right, this excellent maxim I owe to my beloved, my lamented Lady Ellen-court—I say lamented because some secret intelligence seems to assure me, that I shall see her no more. If the Duke is ashamed to acknowledge me as the object of his choice, I should be equally ashamed to be

a party in so mean a connection ; nothing surely can degrade a woman more than receiving the clandestine addresses of a lover ; and if he be greatly her superior, she incurs the odium of imposing upon his weakness. I entreat you will never name the subject to me again, for I would not wed with *royalty* upon such mortifying terms ; to-morrow I shall return to Colonel Ross's to propose for my journey : when you wish to see me, you will favor me with your company *there* ; I shall not therefore be obliged to meet the Duke, who I trust will soon forget me, and depend upon it I will make every effort in my power to efface his image from my mind."

" It will require some *effort* then," said Amelia archly, " I am glad however to hear that, and I will take

care to report it to my *client* by way of a cordial."

"If you value my peace of mind, you will never name me to your client again," said Fanny, "but whether you do or not, my resolution will remain unshaken. But come let us return to the company, where no doubt, our absence has been noticed."

"Oh no doubt," replied Amelia, "such charming creatures as we are, must be *missed so alons*," and she took Fanny's arm, and led the way to the drawing room. As soon as they entered, the Marchioness of Petersfield called Miss Stanhope to her, "Amelia," said she, "we are going to the opera, will you go?"

"I never thought about it," said Miss Stanhope, "what occasions this

sudden resolution, you did not intend it before dinner.”

“Oh no,” replied the Marchioness, but the Marquis of Cheviotdale has been teizing me into the scheme; I had lent my box to lady Mary Bouverie, but she has just sent word that she cannot use it as her eldest son is very ill, Lord Cheviotdale and all heard me read the note to Maria, and he has been almost upon his knees to me, to persuade me to go; he says, this new opera is the most divine thing, and as a further inducement he has promised to introduce the *interesting creole* to us, and every body is making such a fuss about him, that positively it is quite a bore not to know him.”

“And who in the name of wonder, is the *interesting creole*?” said Miss

Stanhope, "I am an enthusiast about *interesting* people, do tell me his name; is he young?"

"His name is Hamilton; he is not young, but he is the most beautiful creature that ever was seen; Lord Cheviotdale says, the ladies are positively dying for him by hundreds."

"Then I pity them," rejoined Amelia, "for it is labour in vain for them to fall in love with him, if he be the rich Mr. Hamilton."

"He is indeed the *rich* Mr. Hamilton in the vocabulary of the votaries of *Plutus*; but he is the *handsome* Mr. Hamilton, and the *interesting* creole, with the ladies," answered the Marchioness, "so you *must* go, but apropos, you spoke as if you were acquainted with him, just now, do you know any of his history, they say it is a most extraordinary one."

“What *I* know about him,” answered Amelia, “has nothing extraordinary in it, it is the most natural thing in the world, he has fallen in love with a young girl, and old batchelors are very apt to do that.”

“Who is she? what young girl do you mean? was vociferated from two or three voices at once.”

“I will not tell you,” answered Amelia, laughing, “if we all go to the opera, you will soon see.”

“You must persuade Maria then,” said the Marchioness, “for she seems averse to the proposal,”

Lady Maria was on the other side the room, whilst they had been talking of Mr. Hamilton, and had heard nothing of the conversation. Miss Stanhope went to her, and endeavoured to persuade her to go to the opera.

“No,” replied her ladyship, “I am going home, and Fanny has just been so kind as to promise to go with me, her visit has surely been long enough here,”

“Your ladyship must excuse me,” “there,” said Amelia, “you are going to run away with Fanny into the country, and that is bad enough, for you know I can hardly live without her; but positively you shall not take her to-night, I will not go to the opera without she goes.”

“Now Fanny, would not you like to go to the opera.”

“I am very fond of the opera,” answered Fanny, “but I have promised Lady Maria to return with her.”

“Well, then, you must break your promise, that is all I know,” inter-

rupted Miss Stanhope, "for a silly vow is better broken than kept."

"I will not break my promise," replied Fanny, "for I never do; but if lady Maria likes to release me, that is a different thing."

"Lady Maria *will* release you, she *must*," said Amelia, "for I am determined to have my own way as long as I can, I am going to be married, and then I shall *never* have it, I suppose."

Lady Maria laughed, "you are a wild creature," said her ladyship, "and do just what you please with every body, I believe I shall go to the opera myself to accommodate you."

"That's a divine creature, now I love you!" rejoined Miss Stanhope, "Come Fanny," turning to her pensive friend, let us go and put a little more brilliancy on our heads, the simple costume in which they are

now dressed will not do for the opera, I intend to be very killing, perhaps, *you* may think you can do mischief enough without the foreign aid of ornament, but *I* am not so vain."

"Dont be long at your toilet," said the Marchioness as Amelia and Fanny left the room, "we are going to have tea directly."

As soon as they were gone, "What a ridiculous fuss is made about that girl, I am positively sick of it," said the Marchioness, "Miss Stanhope's regard for her is quite infatuation."

"Fanny is a very good girl," said Lady Maria, "but I really do wonder sometimes myself, what people see in her, to be so violently enchanted."

"When do the Ellencourts come home?" asked a lady who sat by.—

"I don't know, indeed," answered

Lady Maria “ I wish they were come, for I grow quite uneasy about my charge.”

“ How so,” said the Marchioness, “ I thought you said, she was a very good girl.”

“ So she is,” replied Lady Maria, “ but I am afraid somebody will run away with her ; Col. Ross says there are so many people in love with her,”

The ladies laughed, “ Oh never fear,” said one of them, “ pretty girls are not scarce enough to tempt men to much risk to obtain one !—Don’t some people say she is the daughter of Lord E. by that Italian Mistress, he kept.”

“ Oh dear no,” answered another, “ she is not Lord Ellencourt’s daughter, she is too old for that, but I have heard lady Ellencourt was afraid she would be *her* daughter, for Lord Ellencourt was crazy about her, and

would certainly have married her, if his mother had not made him go abroad."

"Lord Ellencourt is safe now," said a third, "for he is married to a lady of very large fortune."

"I know her very well," said the Marchioness, "she was a schoolfellow of Maria's, a poor stupid thing as ever lived, *pretending* to be so good and so gentle, that she was just like a methodist, she was as fond of this Fanny, before she went abroad, as Miss Stanhope, but had not so spirity a way of shewing it."

"Where is your ladyship going in the country?" said the lady, that spoke first, addressing Lady Maria.

"We are going to Pemberton Abbey; Lady Ellencourt gave us leave to make what use we pleased of it, in her absence; and the Colonel

seems to wish me to stay there the few months he intends being in Ireland,”

“Is the Colonel going to Ireland directly?”

“Oh no, he intends remaining at Pemberton Abbey for three weeks or a month, and then going back with Lord Ballafin, who is now in England, and returns to Ireland at that time.”

“Is Pemberton Abbey a pretty place?”

“I really dont know, for I was never there, but Fanny speaks of it in raptures,” said Lady Maria.

“It was a part of the rich Hamilton estate,” said the talkative lady, at least I believe so, I think Lady Ellencourt said she bought it of Mr. Hamilton’s executors, I don’t mean the Mr. Hamilton we were talking of just now, because you know he is alive;

but he only inherited it as legatee, he was no relation to the old gentleman, I understand; did your ladyship ever hear why old Hamilton went abroad?"

"Never," answered Lady Maria, "I did hear Lady Ellencourt say there was some melancholy cause, but as I hate sad stories, I never asked any questions: was it any thing very shocking?"

"Oh, yes! he had only one child, and that was a son; but he was *lost* when he was just come of age, and never heard of since."

"Surely," exclaimed Lady Maria, "that *must* be impossible, how could a young man of that age be lost unless indeed it was at sea."

"Oh no, it was not at sea; he was one of the finest young men that ever was seen, and every body loved

him that knew him, "poor Mr. Hamilton perfectly idolized him; it is a great many years ago, I am ashamed to say I remember it, for it makes one appear so shockingly old; but I really do; Oh dear there was nothing else talked of at the time, and some thought one thing and some thought another; but nothing ever came out, and it hurt poor old Hamilton so much, that he went abroad, and would never come home again, and he died in the West Indies, I believe."

"What a very extraordinary story," said Lady Maria, "but how came the old gentleman to give his money to this Mr. Hamilton, if he is no relation to him."

"Indeed my dear, I dont know, but I suppose he met with him when he was just going into his dotage, and he

played his cards well, and got on the weak side of the old man ; I hear this Hamilton is very clever."

"As he is of the same name, I should suppose," said Lady Maria, "that he pretended to be related to the Hamilton family."

"Oh no, my dear, he took the name of Hamilton for the estates, he is a creole, they say, and was never in England till now.

"How long ago is it since the son disappeared?" said Lady Maria.

"My dear creature, what a shocking question, when I have just told you, I recollect the circumstance, but however, I may as well tell you, it is nineteen years ago, I was then just a bride ; dear me, it seems only yesterday !—Have you heard that Mr. H. is going to be married?"

"I know nothing about it," said

Lady Maria, with an air of ennui, for Mrs. Ellis had tired her with her circumstantial narrative; the entrance of Miss Stanhope and Fanny put an end to the conversation, and as soon as tea was over, the whole party adjourned to the opera, attended by the Duke of Albemarle, the Marquises of Petersfield, and Cheviotdale and Col. Ross.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Concert.

THE two ladies who accompanied the Marchioness of Peterfield's family party to the opera, had a box adjoining her ladyship's, and as that could boast a better view of the stage, Miss Stanhope accepted their offer of sitting there, in preference to the Marchioness's, and as she was known to be inseparable from Fanny, a seat was also offered to her.

The first act was nearly over when they entered the house, and the first object that struck Fanny on her

entrance, was Mr. Hamilton sitting in the pit with his arms folded across his breast, and his eyes pensively fixed upon the part of the house where their box was situated. He instantly recognized Fanny, and rising from his seat, made her a low bow, confused beyond measure at this public salute, the deepest crimson covered her cheeks; but she, nevertheless, returned the compliment, by a slight inclination of the head.

This did not pass unobserved by Col. Ross, who was in the back part of the box, talking to Lord Chiviotdale, and exclaimed in the first ebullition of fury, "Curse the fellow," Col. Ross was unconscious, that he had spoken aloud, until Lord Cheviotdale, whose eye had followed the Colonel's, as it glanced at the object of his anger, asked him with surprize,

if he meant Mr. Hamilton, “but,” added his Lordship, recollecting himself, “that is impossible, for every body that knows Hamilton, likes him.”

“I know very little of that gentleman,” said the Colonel, “nor do I wish to increase the acquaintance, for he resembles a person I detest, and it was that likeness which forced from my lips the apostrophe that surprised you.”

“By Heaven!” rejoined Lord Cheviotdale, “if Hamilton be like any body who is unamiable, it *can* be only an *exterior* resemblance; therefore, to do away such unjust prejudice, I shall immediately fetch him hither, and, I will bet ten thousand pounds you recant your unfavorable opinion in half an hour afterwards.”

The Marquis did not wait for Co-

lonel Ross to answer; but, quitting the box, made his way into the pit, and returned in a very few minutes, accompanied by Mr. Hamilton.

“I have fulfilled my promise,” said his Lordship, addressing the Marchioness of Petersfield, “here is Mr. Hamilton, drawn hither by the ardent desire he feels to be introduced to your ladyship.”

The Marchioness put on one of her most gracious looks, and replied, “that she should esteem herself happy in the honor of Mr. Hamilton’s acquaintance.”

Colonel Ross bit his lip and received his share of the introductory ceremony with stiff politeness.

Miss Stanhope looked at Lord Cheviotdale with an air of reproach, who instantly understood the hint, and whispering to Mr. Hamilton, led

him into the adjoining box, where he renewed the ceremony of introduction, both to Miss Stanhope and her friend.

The ladies who were in the same box were acquainted with Mr. Hamilton, and gave him so cordial a reception that he accepted their invitation to take a seat in their box, and placing himself behind Fanny, he addressed the chief part of his conversation to her and Miss Stanhope, whose lively sallies seemed to please him much, and often awakened a sweet smile upon his pensive countenance.

There was solid sense in every thing Mr. Hamilton said, and he expressed himself in such elegant language that Fanny listened to him with delight, whilst her soft eyes

beamed upon him a look of the sweetest complacency.

The Duke of Albemarle, who was in the box adjoining, had watched Fanny with all the tortures of jealousy, from the first moment of Mr. Hamilton's introduction; and when he read upon her intelligent countenance such unequivocal proof of her admiration of the man he deemed his rival, he could scarcely rein-in his rage and indignation.

Alarmed lest his emotions should betray him, he left the box, and endeavoured to recover his self-command by a walk in the adjoining coridor.

Sir Everard Mornington was at the opera that evening, and as soon as he espied Miss Stanhope he hastened to join her party.

Sir Everard was one of those lively people who are at home every where, and acquainted with every body; he entered the box therefore without ceremony, and after a slight nod and "*Howdo*" to Amelia, he began a long story to one of the old ladies, about a narrow escape he had experienced in the morning, having been thrown out of a dog-cart tandem which he was driving, to the imminent risk of his own neck and the total demolition of the poor woman's wheelbarrow that had caused the accident, by crossing the street just at the moment young *Jehu* was driving down Bond-street, in the true style of *prime and bang-up!*"

"Good Heavens!" said Miss Stanhope, "you talk so shockingly, that positively I shall be nervous when-

ever I see any body driving tandem or four-in-hand again."

"Don't alarm yourself," replied her lover, "there is nothing so delightful to a man of spirit as a hair-breadth escape now and then; it gives them *éclat*. Now this accident will be in all the papers, and I shall be the topic of conversation for these *three* days. I wish I had broken my collar-bone, or dislocated my arm, or some snug little accident; that would have been *prime*; for there must have been a *bulletin*, and all my friends, or at least my *soi-disant* friends, *must* have been *devilish* sorry, whether they would or not."

"Miss Stanhope laughed, you are the first person," said she "I ever heard wish to break their bones, or dislocate their joints for the sake of no-

tority, and I think as you are so ambitious of fame, you had better join the army in Portugal, and there you may stand a fair chance of having your head taken off in a celebrated manner by a cannon ball, or of losing some of your limbs at least."

"Losing a *limb* or so might be very well, if it happened in England, but as to the *head*," replied Sir Everard, "the loss of *that* would *spoil* all, for there would be no occasion for a *bulletin*; and as services *abroad* are equally preclusive of that delightful oblation to vanity, I will serve my country at *home*, by encouraging its breed of horses, employing its mechanics in building carriage and gratifying the most beautiful part of its population by sporting my elegant figure in all the paraphernalia of a modern son of the

whip. When encouraged by their approving glances, I become invincible to the dangers of my *elevated station*, and *squaring* my elbows, I *handle the ribbons*, and *tip* my *tits* in *their traces*, such a *dasher* that we are prime and bang-up beyond all competition."

Miss Stanhope was not deficient in sense, and yet she was charmed with a jargon that had not a particle of that quality to boast of.

There is no accounting for partialities between the sexes; as it may very frequently be observed, that persons of the most opposite tastes and propensities will select each other, and consider it indispensable to their mutual happiness to be united.

The brilliant alliance which fortune seemed to offer her in her union

with the Duke, had no attraction in her eyes; nor could his Grace's elegant person, his fine understanding, nor the fascination of his manners, tempt her for a moment to forego her choice.

Sir Everard Mornington was a fine healthy-looking young man, and might, perhaps, have displayed something like a *mind*, had studying been the fashion instead of driving; but the company he had been obliged to keep, in order to attain to any degree of perfection in the science he was ambitious to shine in, had as completely vulgarised his ideas, as the quaint dress of the natty coachman had disfigured his naturally fine person.

Yet still in Miss Stanhope's eyes he was all perfection; and as she was no less agreeable to him, there had

been an explanation between them that had developed their views to each other.

A clandestine marriage had been decided on, and the giddy couple anticipated with delight the noise their elopement would make in the great world.

Sir Everard was rich, and therefore Miss Stanhope's fortune was not his object in addressing her; and when she explained to him the clause in her father's will which made her fortune the penalty of her refusing to marry the Duke of Albemarle, he laughed, and told her "he thought it would be prime to *tip the knowing ones the go-by*, and shew them they had more spirit than to mind what old musty parchments said, that helped to do the mischief the old quiz's that made them could not live to finish."

But to return to the Opera House, Mr. Hamilton in the course of conversation learnt that Fanny was going out of town, and when Miss Stanhope named Lady Ellencourt's seat in Yorkshire, he clapped his hand to his forehead, and exclaimed, "Heaven's what a circumstance!"

"Do you know that part of the world," said Miss Stanhope, whose curiosity had been raised by the exclamation.

"Know it!" rejoined Mr. Hamilton, "oh, would to God I had *never* known it!"

Miss Stanhope was alarmed, for she thought Mr. Hamilton was insane, as his eyes rolled for several minutes with a wildness truly terrific. "I thought," said she, endeavoring to turn the conversation, "that you were a stranger in this country Sir,

and had been in England only a few months."

"Most true," replied Mr. Hamilton, seeming to recover himself a little, "I *am* a stranger in this country; I have no *existence here*, but I am trespassing on your attention ladies," continued he, turning to Miss Stanhope and Fanny, "whilst more pleasing objects demand it; the name of the estate that formerly belonged to my deceased friend, awakened ideas most painful to recall; but it is over, and I entreat your pardon."

It was in vain that Mr. Hamilton recommended to Miss Stanhope and Fanny to give their attention to the opera, *he* had fixed it for the night, and they could neither of them hear or see any other person. As to Fanny, she was affected beyond

measure, by the anguish expressed on the countenance of her new friend, and she found it difficult to restrain the tears that were ready to drop from her eyes. Mr. Hamilton perceived her emotion, and fearful lest it should attract the notice of the ladies around her, he rose from his seat, and quitted the box. The Duke of Albemarle entered as he did so, and placing himself behind Fanny, he remained stationary until the party quitted the theatre.

It was in vain however, that he addressed his conversation to Fanny, or indeed to Miss Stanhope, so lost were they in conjectures as to the possible cause of Mr. Hamilton's sorrow, that a monosyllable was the utmost the Duke could obtain in answer to any thing that he said? inflamed with jealousy, and exaspe-

rated beyond the bounds of prudence he seized Fanny's arm as she was entering the Coffee-room, and darting at her a look of anger, he said in a tone of voice that spoke his inward emotion; "inexorable girl, forbear to trifle thus with my happiness—remember my life is in your hands: never will I marry any other woman!"

"Then you will *die single*," said a harsh voice behind him, and at the same moment he felt a hand grasp his arm with violence. He turned round and beheld Lord Somertown, who immediately obliged him to quit Fanny, and go with him.

"I came hither," said his Lordship, "in search of my nephew, little imagining what a *fool* I was looking for,"

Ashamed and confused, beyond expression, the Duke suffered himself to

be led away by Lord Somertown, (who had taken hold of his arm) to his carriage, without proffering a single word. His uncle was silent also for some time, after they were seated in the chariot, at length however, he spoke :—“ I had formed a better opinion of your understanding,” said his Lordship. “ A man may *trifle* with as many women as he pleases, but when he so far forgets himself as to talk of marriage, he deserves to be posted for a blockhead. An intrigue with the companion of your intended wife is most ridiculously indiscreet, and particularly so before you are *secure* of her. It is not morality I am preaching to you, for you already know my opinion on that subject ; all I wish to inculcate is a *prudent* regard to my wishes and your own interest ; I have set my

mind upon this union, and if it fails through your delinquency, woe unto the frail cause of it ! You know me, Henry, take care then how you offend me ; if you value the painted puppet you were pretending to worship in that fulsome strain of idolatry, beware of drawing down my displeasure upon her. If I thought she stood in the way of your marriage, with Miss Stanhope, by Heavens I would annihilate her ; she should vanish from your fascinated eyes nor leave a trace of her insignificant existence behind her."

The Duke shuddered as he listened to Lord Somertown's threatening language, for well did he know that if the *power* were lent him, he did not want the *will* to execute the direst vengeance on those he deemed his enemies. The bare idea of exposing

the lovely Fanny to his uncle's fury, was dreadful to him, and he resolved to dissemble his real sentiments under a shew of obedience. "I am concerned," said he, hesitating from the consciousness of a duplicity to which his soul was a stranger; "I am concerned that your Lordship should mistake a little unmeaning gallantry shewn to a young beautiful woman, for a serious attachment; I have told your Lordship that it was my wish to marry Miss Stanhope, and I now assure you that I still admire the same lady that then occupied my heart in preference to all others, and if I do not marry Amelia Stanhope, the impediment to our union will not originate in *me*."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Lord Somerton, "if you are sincere it is well, but think not that I am to be de-

ceived by a stripling like you. That girl is an artful creature who has her views in her pretended coyness; but I repeat, beware how you let me suspect any thing serious in that quarter; remember it will be at the peril of your *minion!*”

The Duke again affirmed that he was ready to fulfil the contract with Miss Stanhope, and Lord Somertown was, or at least appeared to be, satisfied.

When, however, he retired to his apartment, the agitation of the Duke's mind was intolerable, he had pledged his word to his Uncle to marry Miss Stanhope, provided she were willing to accept him as a husband; and although the promise was extorted by his fears for Fanny's safety, he could not for an instant conceive the possibility of forfeiting

his word, should she contrary to her solemn assurances, place no barrier in the way of their nuptials. "Good Heavens!" said he, "what would become of me should I find myself entangled in a net of my own weaving? Amelia has promised to render our marriage impossible; is she then betrothed to another? and does she mean to evade her union with me, by running away with her favored lover? Alas! her schemes may be rendered abortive by the vigilance of her guardians, and between threats and persuasion, she may be brought to consent to the annihilation of my happiness. Well, should that be the case, I must console myself by reflecting that my fears, for the adored object of my affection, led me to the fatal sacrifice. Had I appeared irresolute, or hesitated in answering my uncle

his vengeance would have fallen on the defenceless Fanny, and then the agony of my soul would have been too much for me to support. No, I have acted in the only way that was left me to insure her safety, and if that were purchased with my life, it were cheaply bought. But I will cherish better hopes, Amelia Stanhope is generous, she will be faithful and I shall yet possess the power of addressing the only woman I can ever love!

With these reflections fluctuating between hope and fear, the Duke passed a sleepless night, and arose the next morning dispirited and pale from the anxiety that still preyed upon his spirits.

In the mean time, Fanny had not been much more calm, but her agitation had not originated in the same

cause, for love had nothing to do with the emotions that harrassed *her* mind; an interest that she could not define was excited in her heart for Mr. Hamilton, and it was with a mixture of terror and joy that she received the following note from him as he was assisting her to get into the Marchioness of Petersfield's carriage. She counted the minutes until she was alone, and free to peruse it, for she would not trust even Miss Stanhope with the knowledge of her having received it. The instant her lively friend had bid her good night, she tore open the seal, with a trembling hand, and read the following mysterious words:—

“ You are going to Pemberton Abbey, so am I, and I trust we shall there find an opportunity of meeting without spies or intruders; I

want to tell you the history of my eventful life; something whispers me that *you* are interested in it, beyond what you at present suspect, oh, should it prove so—what bliss for both of us! I dare not trust the thought. Farewell until we meet again!

CHAPTER XV.

Tête-à-tête.

THE agitation excited in the bosom of Fanny, by the reading of Mr. Hamilton's note, did not easily subside. The words contained in it, implied a mystery that awakened every feeling of her heart, should she indeed find a parent! The idea was insupportable, for although inspired by hope, it was unsanctioned by reason; and she felt that to part with the sweet expectation, however vague or unfounded, would now cost her very dear. The whole of the night

wore away in unavailing conjecture ; and the morning found her agitation as much bewildered in the labyrinth of uncertainty, as when she laid her aching head upon her pillow. She was obliged however to conceal her emotions, lest any step should be taken to prevent the promised interview. The few succeeding days that intervened between the opera and her departure for Pemberton Abbey, were engrossed by preparations for the journey, and although Amelia tried every stratagem to get Fanny to come to her at the Marquis of Petersfield's she could not succeed, and she quitted London without seeing the Duke of Albemarle, who did not dare to make any attempt to obtain that pleasure, except by visiting Amelia, frequently in the hope of meeting her there. Disappointment

was constantly his portion, however, and, Lord Somertown, whose vigilance had never slept, since his suspicions were first awakened, was convinced that Fanny left town without any communication having passed between them. That vindictive nobleman had long been conversant in the best method of employing spies, and when he wished to ascertain any fact relative to those who had incurred his displeasure, he spared neither pains nor expence to obtain the information he wanted. Poor Fanny was now the object of his vengeance and his intended victim; and he took care to surround the steps of the hapless girl with creatures devoted to his service, and willing to assist his most diabolical plans for the sake of obtaining a continuation of the bribes that had

perverted their principles. There is a God, however, whose All-seeing wisdom can penetrate the darkest machination of cunning, and whose power can protect the weakest of his creatures against a host of enemies. That merciful being was now watching over the seemingly unprotected Fanny, and viewing with an eye of stern displeasure the dark plots of her insidious foes.

Lady Maria Ross was but an indifferent traveller, and as the weather was warm, and the journey of more than two hundred and fifty miles in length; it was determined that the family should sleep two nights on the road. The first day's journey ended at a lone inn, nearly an hundred miles from town, in a spot so romantically beautiful, that Fanny was enchanted with the rich scenery

around it, displayed by a clear moon now nearly at the full, in a more interesting landscape than when gilt by the sun-beams of "*the garish eye of day.*" Instead, therefore, of retiring to bed when she entered her room for the night, she continued at one of the windows, contemplating with delight the beautiful prospect until a clock, from a distant church, struck one, she was then thinking of seeking her pillow, but as she was receding from the window, her eye rested on the tall figure of a man, who appeared to be gazing at the spot where she stood; his attitude was so fixed, that she imagined he had been there some time, although she had not before observed him; but whether he could distinguish her or not, she could not ascertain, as no sign on his part implied any consciousness of her

existence. The sight, however, of a human being, at that dreary hour, and in that lone situation, for the stillness of the house had long proclaimed that its inhabitants were wrapt in the arms of sleep, gave her a sensation of alarm, that made her close her window with precipitation and drawing the curtain that shaded it, she as hastily prepared for bed.

Before she entered that mansion of repose, however, she stole another glance from the window, to satisfy herself, whether the figure was still there. It had vanished from the spot where she had first seen it, but although the declining beams of the moon cast abroad shadow over one part of the scene, she was soon able to distinguish it standing close under her window, and with looks cast upwards, as if observing her chamber. A handkerchief ap-

plied to the face, completed shrouded the features from her ken, had he stood in the light, but the dark spot he had chosen, rendered that caution unnecessary. As Fanny perceived the figure, she uttered a faint scream, and put her hand before her eyes. When she again withdrew it, the apparition had vanished, and although she watched until another hour resounded from the village turret, she beheld it no more.

It would be a vain task to attempt to describe the variety of conjectures, which occupied the mind of Fanny, through the wakeful hours that succeeded this mysterious vision; sometimes she was inclined to believe, that *she* was not concerned in its appearance; but the next moment she rejected that idea, and felt an instinctive conviction, that it portended the vigilant

observation of some friend or foe.— And yet she did not stand in need of an act of friendship, attended with such apparent inconvenience to the person who performed it. And as to a *foe*, she was unconscious that she had one. At length, overcome with fatigue and watching, she dropped into a deep slumber, from which she did not awake until a hasty summons to breakfast informed her how much she had trespassed beyond the usual hour of rising. The bustle occasioned by oversleeping herself broke the train of her thoughts, and rendered her fitter to meet the family at the breakfast table. The journey of that day was unmolested by any incident, and again the travellers rested at a lone house. It was always Col. Ross's custom when he slept on the road to avoid towns, and

the inns he had selected to repose at in this journey, were every way calculated to make his choice approved, they were replete with every convenience for the accommodation of a large family, and the spots, where they stood the most picturesque that can be imagine Fanny had been struck with the beauty of the scenery surrounding that where she passed the first night ; but when she viewed the situation of the second inn, she was still more enchanted, and she could not forbear exclaiming, as she alit from the carriage, that she never saw such a paradise before. Lady Maria was no enthusiast, either in poetry or painting, and therefore she viewed the wild beauties of the majestic hills, the rich luxuriance of the scattered woods, and all the magic beauty of the fairy landscape, with

a sang-froid that astonished Fanny ; whose every faculty appeared strained to catch the prospect that delighted her. The moon was risen in its full splendor, by the time tea was over.

“ Oh how I should like a walk this delightful evening,” said Fanny, thoughtlessly, “ if it were not for the fear of ——” she stopped short and, blushing exceedingly, recollected that she had determined not to mention the nocturnal apparition that had alarmed her.

“ The fear of what ?” repeated Colonel Ross, “ what fear can you have, Fanny, that need prevent your taking a walk such an enchanting evening as this, provided *I* escort you ?”

“ O none, to be sure,” replied she, “ I only meant, that I should be afraid to walk alone.”

“ Alone, certainly, would not be

proper," said the Colonel, "but there can be no objection to your going well attended—Maria will you accompany us?"

"Oh no," answered her ladyship, "the fatigue of the journey is quite enough for me, I am not such an admirer of nature, nor have I such a romantic turn for moon-light contemplations as Fanny." This was spoken in a tone of splenetic fretfulness, that betrayed Lady Maria's displeasure at the Colonel's proposal, and Fanny immediately declared that she would not go, nor could the eloquence exerted by the Colonel induce her to accept his offer of attending her. He appeared piqued at her refusal, and muttered something between his teeth of self-willed girls.

Poor Fanny was glad to escape

from her companions, who were nei-
of them in a good humour, and there-
fore she retired early to her chamber.

“ At least,” said she, as she seated
herself at her window, “ *here* I need
not fear, that I shall be disturbed by
the *apparition*, he has scarcely ridden
hither on the wings of the wind, to
disturb my nocturnal contempla-
tions !”

The room that Fanny inhabited,
looked into a small garden, from
whence a flight of steps reached to a
balcony close under her window, the
bustle of the inn had not yet sub-
sided, but the sounds were distant,
for the apartment she occupied was
at the end of a corridor, and quite
remote from the interior of the
house.

A beautiful champaign country
opened to the view at the extremity

of the garden. On the left were seen scattered woods, bounded by lofty hills, so varied in size, that they appeared, as the moon silvered their majestic points, as if they were rising emulous of reflecting her lustrous beams.

To the right, on a bold eminence, and unadorned by even a single tree, to soften the stern aspect of the picture, rose the majestic ruins of an ancient castle, which seemed in sullen pride to frown upon the sons of little men, who now dared to tread the sacred spot, where once flourished heroes unbending and invincible.

As the proud battlements that entrenched them, Fanny gazed with delight, as the clear moon darted her silver radiance through the dismantled windows, and ivy clad loopholes of the gloomy tower. The

scene was solemn and sublime, and calculated to raise the enthusiastic imagination of youth to the highest pitch of mental enjoyment; by degrees the noises in the house died away, and the calm stillness was unbroken, save that at intervals the distant watch-dog barked at some casual straggler within the precincts of his nightly care.

Fanny was in raptures; she had extinguished her candle, that its light might not expose her to the observation of any distant wanderer. Her eye dwelt alternately upon the rich forest, the hills bright with the rays of luna, and the frowning castle proud in majestic loneliness.

And that *seeing* might not be the only sense, a wood-bine, whose luxuriant branches covered the walls of the house, and breathed fragrance around;

now intruded some of its spicy flowers within the open casement; Fanny inhaled the balmy gale as the night breeze shook its dewy wings around her, and entranced in an ecstasy of enjoyment, she sat unmindful of the waning night, until a clock striking *one*, roused her from her pleasing reverie; the hour reminded her of the figure she had seen the preceding night; and so strong was the power of fancy, upon her mind, that her eye mechanically sought it in the scene before her. She looked however in vain; the most profound stillness reigned, and the clear rays of the moon displayed nothing but inanimate objects to her view.—“No,” said she, speaking aloud, unconscious that she did so, “No he has not followed me here; alas! I fear,

my imagination misleads me, and the fairy vision it has conjured up, to delight, will melt into *Æther*. As she spoke she cast her eyes towards the castle, and fancied that she saw something emerge from one its delapidated portals, she was soon convinced that she was right, for she beheld the same tall figure she had seen the preceding night, moving towards the garden, that skirted the inn. Although she had almost *wished* to see it, an indistinct horror seized her as she gazed upon its approaching foot steps, and she was going to retire from the window, when she thought she heard her name pronounced distinctly, though in a low voice, under her window; startled at the sound, she leant forward to ascertain whence it proceeded, and to her astonishment beheld Colonel

Ross standing in the balcony beneath. "What can be the cause of this nocturnal watching?" said he, rather sternly, "this is the second time I have been witness to your sitting up half the night at your window."

The extreme beauty of the surrounding scenery attracted me to my window to view it," replied Fanny, "and when I had once indulged in the contemplation I found it impossible to leave it; there is nothing extraordinary sure in that, when you recollect what an enthusiastic admirer I am of the beauties of nature."

"Nature has a *variety* of beauties, most undoubtedly," replied the Colonel, "and I suppose the fortunate being you apostrophised just now is one of them, is he not?"

“ I am astonished,” replied Fanny, “ that you should think it worth while to watch me, and listen under my window, Sir, at an hour when it appears so strange to you that *I* should be watching?”

“ Your astonishment would cease,” rejoined he, “ could you know the real state of my heart ; could you know that the most trivial of your actions is important in my eyes, but when I think you are about to bestow upon a favored lover that heaven of love, which I am determined no man but myself shall possess, and *live!* it is *then* that every feeling of my soul is harrowed up, every energy awakened, and the hurricane of passion transports me beyond the boundary of reason and prudence.”

“ This language is certainly unfit

for me to listen to," interrupted Fanny, with dignity, "and strange and incomprehensible as your allusions are, Sir, I forbear to question you." So saying, she shut down the window and left the Colonel to the enjoyment of his own reflections.

It may readily be supposed that they were none of the pleasantest: hurried away by the emotion of the moment, he had made a premature discovery of a passion he had hitherto concealed with such caution and, he knew enough of Fanny to be certain that he had incurred her indignation, if not her abhorrence, by so infamous an avowal.

In the meantime she retired from the window, overwhelmed by feelings of resentment and distress impossible to describe; she had always felt a secret antipathy to C^ol^one^l ^{the} Wil-

which was now justified by his atrocious conduct; her heart had often reproached her for the ungrateful return she made to the continual acts of kindness she experienced from him, and she had often endeavored to conquer a dislike she thought founded in caprice. It was now proved, however, that her repugnance to his friendship was the instinct of a mind too pure and delicate to assimilate with his; which though veiled beneath the specious mask of hypocrisy was the seat of every vice that deforms human nature.

“ Oh Lady Ellencourt! my beloved benefactress,” exclaimed Fanny, clasping her hands together in an agony of distress, “ to what a care have you confided your unhappy girl? Ah little does Lord ^{Ellencourt} think what a villain

is honored with the *name* of his *friend*! Return, dear protectors of my infancy, return and restore me, once more! to happiness and security!"

Full of these thoughts, the disconsolate Fanny threw herself upon her bed, and vented her oppressed feelings in a flood of tears. When her emotions had in some measure subsided, she recollected the figure she had seen emerging from the Castle, and she longed to ascertain whether it were indeed the same that she had seen the preceding night. She feared, however, to go to the window, lest Colonel Ross should be still beneath it, and mistake her motive by imagining she came thither to look for him. This consideration restrained her curiosity, and she went to bed without stealing one glance from the win-

dow. The next morning, when she was ready to descend to breakfast, she felt the greatest awkwardness at the idea of meeting Colonel Ross, nor did she entertain a doubt that *his* confusion would at least equal hers, if not exceed it. What was her astonishment then, when on entering the room where Lady Maria and he were already at breakfast, she beheld him, his brow armed with frowns, and heard him in a tone of reproachful authority, reprimand her for her late attendance at the breakfast table, "this tardiness," added he, "is owing no doubt to your *nocturnal watchings*, but I warn you Miss Fanny, that I will have no such doings whilst you are under *our* protection."

Struck dumb by the astonishment that had seized her, Fanny seated

herself at the table, without uttering ^{DOSSI-} a word; but she felt equally unable to eat as to speak.

Lady Maria observed her distress, and good-naturedly wished to relieve it. "My dear Fanny," said she, "do not let the Colonel's reprimand distress you so; he only speaks for your good. His anxiety for your welfare makes him, perhaps, too scrupulous about trifles. You had been expressing your admiration of moon-light scenery; it was therefore natural you should indulge yourself with a *look*, as you could not take a *walk*."

"The admiring a moon-light scene from her chamber window, is certainly no *crime*," said the Colonel, "if to *admire that* were the motive that carried her there; but when it is to converse with a stranger, an *ad-*

venturer, a person that nobody knows, and one of whose doubtful character she has received ample warning, that a young lady leaves her quiet pillow, and exposes herself at the dead hour of the night to the dangers of such an assignation, then, indeed, the case is altered, and the seemingly simple action deserves the severest reprehension.”

Fanny's surprise gave way to her indignation, when she found herself thus daringly accused of a thing she had not even dreamt of.

“ I cannot express,” said she, “ the astonishment that has seized me to find such a palpable falsehood imputed to me. I cannot even guess what Colonel Ross alludes to, as I solemnly declare that I conversed with no man from my window; had made appointment with no

man; and therefore cannot possibly deserve the Colonel's allegation against me."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the Colonel, striking his hands together with well-feigned astonishment; "I did not think you were capable of such duplicity. Surely, Miss Fanny, you will not tell me that I did not *hear* you speaking to a man from your window? that I did not hear that man declare the most ardent passion for you, and swear that no other should ever possess you and *live*? You will not have the effrontery to deny *that*!"

Fanny was thunderstruck to hear the very words repeated by the Colonel which he had himself made use of to her, and which she supposed he would have trembled to find remem-

bered, turned as an accusation against herself.

It was an audacity in villainy too mighty for her to cope with; she could only lift her hands and eyes in silent wonder.

“ I know,” continued the Colonel, “ the *fellow* that is taking such pains to follow you; it is the man who made acquaintance with you, in Hyde Park, when I came so opportunely to save you from the consequences of your folly.”

“ The gentleman who rescued me from the impertinence of a rude stranger,” said Fanny, “ is Mr. Hamilton, and as much distinguished for his politeness as his riches. Surely *he* cannot deserve the epithets you bestow upon him, Sir?”

“ The person who imposes himself upon you, for Mr. Hamilton, is not

that gentleman," said the Colonel, "he only resembles him in person, and makes use of that likeness to impose upon the unwary."

"As I am acquainted with only *one* Mr. Hamilton," replied Fanny; "his resemblance to another whom I never saw, could avail him nothing with me."

"You seem inclined to vindicate your conduct, rather than confess your error," said the Colonel, sternly; "but I would wish you to recollect, Miss Fanny, that as Lady Ellencourt entrusted you to our guardianship, during her absence, it behoves us to watch over your conduct; and if Lady Maria chuses to allow you such latitude, *I* don't; and I give you notice that your *nocturnal lover* will be treated with the severity he de-

serves, if he is found lurking about Pemberton-Abbey."

"If the man who was so daring as to declare a passion for me, last night, in defiance to decency and morality," said Fanny, "if *he* can be found, I think he cannot be treated with more severity than he deserves; with more contempt than *I* feel for him."

"'Tis well," said the Colonel, his eyes flashing fury, "I am glad I *know* your sentiments, madam; and you may depend upon it I will act accordingly."

Fanny involuntarily trembled as she listened to this menace, though she could not possibly conceive what it was intended to convey.

Lady Maria looked surprised, and endeavoured, with a good-humoured laugh, to turn the conversation to

something more agreeable. Though subject to little gusts of fractiousness, when her vanity was wounded, Lady Maria was naturally good-natured, and her kind heart was pained by Fanny's evident distress. Her efforts, however, proved all in vain; the Colonel preserved a sullen silence, whilst tears of real anguish and dismay bedewed the cheeks of the unhappy Fanny.

But very little breakfast was eaten, by any of the party; and the carriage being announced as in readiness for their departure, they began their journey in a frame of mind not likely to render it very pleasant.

CHAPTER XVI.

Pemberton-Abbey.

DURING the *silent* ride that ensued, Fanny's ideas were occupied by the most painful reflections, the most anxious uncertainty.

Colonel Ross had spoken as if he were certain that he knew the person whose appearance for two nights had excited her curiosity so greatly : the figure had seemed to her eye to resemble that of Mr. Hamilton ; but it was impossible for her to ascertain if it were really him or not, as his face had never been revealed to her view. He had promised to see her at Pemberton-Abbey, in the letter she had

received from him just before she left London ; but there appeared no probability that he could have followed her steps with such exactitude upon the road, as to rest every night at the same spot, and that without being observed during the day ; nor did there appear any reasonable motive for his lurking about the precincts of the inn at the dead hour of the night, without knowing that she would be at her chamber window, if it were really her he wanted to speak to.

The *field of conjecture* is boundless ; and Fanny's imagination wandered in it until it was weary ; nor could it draw a single conclusion from its researches, to rest upon after the fatiguing exertion.

Towards the close of the day the turrets of Pemberton-Abbey struck

the eyes of the travellers as they ascended a steep hill, from the summit of which they beheld the rich valley in which that venerable edifice was situate.

An exclamation, of pleasure, burst involuntarily from the lips of Fanny, as she recognised the spot where she had passed so many happy days with her beloved Lady Ellencourt, whilst her heightened colour and sparkling eyes betrayed the emotions of her heart.

“ You are a happy girl, Fanny,” said Lady Maria, smiling; “ your romantic admiration of beautiful scenery seems to give you real delight.”

“ It is not mere admiration that excites my pleasure now,” replied Fanny; “ the recollection of dear friends has its share in the sweet

sensation. The sight of Pemberton-Abbey brings the happiest moments of my life to my remembrance; and I can scarcely persuade myself that the dear lady I long to embrace, will not be there to receive me. Oh, if she were, what happiness would be mine !”

“The scheme of happiness would be *incomplete*,” said Colonel Ross with a sneer, “unless the *Dear Lord* were there as well as the *Dear Lady* !”

“Most true,” answered Fanny; “Lord Ellencourt is almost as dear to my heart as his amiable mother. I am not sure whether he is not *quite* as dear. The debt of gratitude, to his Lordship, has the claim of *priority*. But for *his* goodness, I should never have known that revered lady.”

“You must take care *now*,” said Colonel Ross, “how you make such

unequivocal confessions of *loving* his Lordship. Young Lady Ellencourt may not like it, perhaps, so well as the Dowager did."

"The love I bear Lord Ellencourt," replied Fanny, blushing, "can never give offence to any body, and, I am sure, least of all, to the sweet lady you allude to."

"I am glad to hear it is of such a nature," replied Colonel Ross, sarcastically. "I merely spoke with the wish of cautioning you against professions of regard that might give rise to jealousy, should Lady Ellencourt be one of those *narrow-minded women* who wish to keep their husbands to themselves."

"Did every one consider the marriage vow in the same sacred light that *I* do," replied Fanny, "there

would need no caution against an infringement of its rights.”

As she spoke her cheeks glowed with indignation, and she cast a look of disdain at Colonel Ross that cut him to the soul. Yet, although it awakened remorse in his depraved mind, it did not stimulate repentance, but rather served to inflame that desire of revenge which was already kindled in his bosom.

Lady Maria appeared lost in astonishment as she listened, in silence, to the dispute between her husband and Fanny. The asperity which was evident in the words of both surprised her beyond measure.

The kindness with which the Colonel had hitherto treated Fanny, making the change as wonderful on his side, as Fanny's native mildness did on hers.

Some secret motives must actuate both ; but what it could possibly be, remained impervious to the shallow capacity of the good-natured Lady Maria.

At length, the arrival of the carriage at Pemberton-Abbey, put a stop to conjecture and resentment ; and the bustle of establishing themselves in their different apartments, procured amusement for all the travellers.

Fanny's mind could now admit but one subject ; it was wholly absorbed in reflections, on her absent friends, whose images, ever present in her grateful heart, were now more particularly brought before her eyes. by the thousand local circumstances calculated to recall the pleasing remembrance on the spot where their

kindness, so often repeated, had endeared them to her.

The bed-room allotted for Fanny's use, was the one she had occupied when Lady Ellencourt was there; and as her Ladyship's room was not chosen by Lady Maria, the whole suite of apartments were at Fanny's command, whose greatest pleasure now consisted in wandering through the forsaken chambers, gazing alternately at a picture of Lord Ellencourt, that was over the chimney in the dressing-room, and another of his amiable mother, which hung in the adjoining bed-room. It seemed, as she contemplated the senseless canvas, as if the features so admirably portrayed upon its surface, sympathised in the sufferings she complained of. Lady Ellencourt wore the expression of the tenderest pity,

whilst those of her son appeared animated by the glow of spirited resentment.

“ Dear shades of my distant protectors !” exclaimed Fanny, apostrophising the portraits she was looking at, “ why can ye not now assist the forlorn object of your kind solicitude ? Why am I doomed to suffer the tyranny of oppression, even in the very house where my infant heart first learnt the pleasing lessons of gratitude and affection ? But why do I call myself forlorn ? Am I not under the immediate protection of Heaven ? Can any power, however mighty, prevail against the arm of Omnipotence ? To that benign guardianship I commend myself. And *he*, whose watchful eye makes even a sparrow fall, will not suffer confiding innocence to trust in vain !”

With thoughts such as these did the artless Fanny endeavour to sooth her perturbed mind, and by placing her confidence in Heaven, she soon found her terrors subside, and that peace which the world can neither give nor take away, became the innate of her heart.

CHAPTER XVII.

Painful Suspence.

IT is time now to return to Miss Stanhope and the Duke of Albemarle, for whose nuptials every preparation went on with the utmost celerity.

To have seen Amelia in the midst of the crowd of milliners, dress-makers, jewellers, &c. &c. that daily surrounded her, giving orders for the various articles of finery necessary to render her bridal pomp complete, nobody would have imagined that she was determined never to fulfill the contract for which she was pre-

paring ; indeed, that she had already put it out of her power to do so.

It is impossible to describe the anxiety of mind which the Duke of Albemarle suffered, during the continuance of this suspense ; for, notwithstanding Miss Stanhope's promises to render the scheme of the marriage abortive, and her injunction to him to rely implicitly upon her faith, he could not divest himself wholly of doubt and distrust ; and he would most assuredly have disclosed the truth to his uncle, had his own safety alone been endangered by so doing.

The Duke of Albemarle was naturally open and candid, and the part so full of duplicity which he had undertaken pained him exceedingly.

Conversing, one day, with Lord Somertown on the subject of his ap-

proaching marriage, with Miss Stanhope, he became suddenly perplexed; his colour heightened, and his hesitating accents betrayed the perturbation of his breast. His uncle perceiving his confusion, and attributing it to his reluctance to marry Miss Stanhope, although he did not suspect his nephew of any intention to deceive him, he regarded him with a stern look, and speaking in that undertone which is so expressive of deliberate malice, he said, "Whatever may be your thoughts, Henry, on the union *I* have decided upon, tell them not to *me*; and beware how your actions betray a design to oppose my wishes. You are in the toil of the fowler, and cannot escape the meshes that enclose you. You will perhaps tell me, you despise poverty, and are fearless of my displeasure.

But answer me, boy, can you brave *death*? Not your own death, but the extinction of that painted butterfly you doat upon?" The Duke involuntary shuddered. "Yes," continued Lord Somertown, "that *insect* is in my power, and I tell you *she dies*, instantly dies, should any act of disobedience on your part call down my vengeance upon her. I now leave you to your own decision. One step, one single step of your's, will hurl your minion to destruction!"

Lord Somertown did not wait for the Duke's answer, but instantly quitting the room, left him to the meditations his horrible speech had excited.

It is impossible to describe the Duke's feelings, scarcely, indeed, could he analyse them himself, such a mixture were they of anger and

apprehensive, indignation and anguish ; like a lion struggling in the toils of the hunter, his rage could only be equalled by his grief at the total subversion of his power.

In regard to Lord Somertown's assertion, that he held Fanny in his power, the Duke, however, flattered himself that it was made only with a view to alarm him. The protection of Lady Maria Ross, he judged, was too respectable to admit any doubt of her actual safety, at least, for the present, but he knew the cruel vindictive temper of his uncle too well to doubt that he would find some mode of revenging himself upon that hapless girl, at some future opportunity, should any action of his nephew's seem to authorise the proceeding. Thus circumstanced, the Duke was under the necessity of

committing himself to the guidance of Amelia, and to await in trembling expectation the result of her scheme for dissolving the union. It was equally necessary that he should assume such an appearance of tranquility as was very foreign to the feelings of his heart, but which was indispensable if he hoped to impose upon his uncle.

The time, however, approached with rapid strides, and no action of Miss Stanhope's seemed to authorise the hopes she had given.

A thousand doubts disturbed the mind of her appointed bridegroom, who suffered without daring to complain. She saw, but took no notice of his sufferings, without it was to add to them by some little flippancy, some question relative to a future arrangement that was made with such

an air of seriousness as never failed to give added poignancy to his already irritated feelings. She would then laugh at his "*doleful looks,*" as she called the appearance of anguish, that in spite of his best efforts would steal over his features whilst suffering under the tortures of prolonged suspense.

"Your Grace gives me but a melancholy prospect," said she one day, "when I try to peep over the matrimonial pale, by picturing to myself the felicity of our future conugal *tête-a-têtes*. That long face of yours would make an excellent model for a bust of Trophonias. I dare say a week of your company will have as good an effect upon my vivacity, as a visit of the same length to the cave of that laughter - quelling gentleman. Depend upon it, I shall never even

smile again after the holy noose is tied; so pray excuse me for making the best of my time now." And away ran the giddy girl, laughing at the poor Duke's distress in the most unmerciful manner.

At the signing of the marriage articles, the Duke of Abemarle expected that Amelia would make the promised declaration of her aversion to the proposed marriage; but to his unspeakable disappointment and surprise, Miss Stauhope appeared in more than usual spirits, on the occasion, and introduced a gentleman to witness the deed by his signature, to whom she said, she had promised that honour in a frolic, one day, and who now claimed the fulfilment of her promise with an earnestness she could not repress. Her guardian and Lord Somertown yielded to what

they supposed a giddy whim, and Sir Everard Mornington, (for *he* was the gentleman,) wrote his name where the lawyers directed him; nor did the Duke of Abemarle perceive any irregularity in the placing of the other names, although his Grace appeared to be poring over the fatal instrument longer than any other person present.

I will not pretend to describe what were his feelings when twelve o'clock the next day was fixed upon for his nuptials; nor attempt to delineate the agonized expression of his features when, as he was leading Miss Stanhope into the drawing-room, after the signature of the articles, she said in a half whisper, "I have succeeded even beyond my hopes; my happiness is now insured; and I hope to morrow will appear to your Grace

as it does to me, the harbinger of love and joy.”

The Duke endeavoured to make an answer, but the words died upon his lips, for as he looked up, he perceived his uncle observing him with fury sparkling in his eyes, and as he passed him, uttered these words in an under voice, “I see your reluctance, your ungrateful delinquency ; but beware, remember you are passing sentence upon your minion.”

CHAPTER XIV.

The Nuptials.

AFTER a sleepless night, the morning broke upon the Duke of Albemarle; no hint had been given him, by the merciless Amelia, to cheer his flagging spirits, and he now began to think himself the dupe of a mean artifice. "She saw my reluctance to marry her," said he, mentally, and fearful lest my repugnance should surmount every other consideration, and induce me to declare my sentiments to Lord Somertown; she has stooped to the meanest of disguise to entrap me securely. The ducal coronet has

greater charms in her eyes than honour or integrity. And shall I marry such a woman? no! every feeling of my soul recoils from the bare idea. How can I listen to that awful exhortation at the communion of the sacred ceremony? As he shall answer at the great Day of Judgment! Can I listen, I say, and then consent to rush on wilful perjury? Impossible! If, indeed, I am driven to that extremity, I will throw off the disguise that so ill conceals my feelings, even at the foot of the Altar. But alas! what do I rave at? Lord Somertown will then wreak his vengeance upon the lovely object of my affection, and transfix my heart with a far keener shaft than any suffering inflicted on me alone. Yet surely I shall have time enough to warn her of danger ere it can reach her.

With thoughts like these was the mind of the unhappy lover perplexed, and so absent was he to every thing relating to the business of the morning, that he made the whole party wait above half an hour, by neglecting to dress himself in time. When he arrived at Lord Petersfield's, where the ceremony was to be performed, he found all the company assembled, and received a severe rebuke from Lord Somertown for his remissness.

“ Make the best apology you can to your bride,” said his Lordship, “ she deserves it of you, for she has borne your neglect with unparalleled good humour.”

The Duke advanced to take Miss Stanhope's hand, who stooping forward, said in a low voice, whilst an arch smile played on her lip :

“ For a laggard in love, and a dastard
in war,
“ Was to wéd the fair Ellen of young
Lochinvar.”

The Duke paid but little attention to her words, however, for his whole frame shook with agony, when he saw the Bishop of P——, who was waiting to perform the ceremony, open his book, and heard his voice, reading the awful exhortation just now alluded to. A mist seemed to cover his eyes, and a sickness seized his heart; for Amelia stood passively, and seemingly assenting to the compliance of the sacrifice. When, however, the Bishop made a little pause, at the end of the solemn exordium, Amelia stepped forward.

“ Stop,” said she, “ that awful appeal to my sincerity demands a serious answer, you exhort me not

to conceal any *impediment* that may forbid my union with Henry Pierrepont, Duke of Albermarle, and I know of one that is *insurmountable*.

The whole company were struck with astonishment, the Duke's countenance brightened, but Lord Somertown clapping his hands together, exclaimed, "Some infernal plot has been hatching but beware, boy, how you trifle with *me!*"

The Bishop commanded silence, by waving his hand, and then addressing Miss Stanhope.

"This is a strange time, Madam," said he, in an impressive tone, "to start objections to a union to which you have hitherto appeared to assent; and let me tell you, with the candour that becomes my holy function, that you have been guilty of great levity, in suffering matters to go so far before you make known your objections to

the marriage, we are all met here to see solemnized. It is, nevertheless, necessary those objections should be known; I request therefore to hear them."

"I intreat your Lordship not to censure my conduct," said Amelia, "under the impression, that *levity* induced me to act as I have done, since I can solemnly assure you, that I acted from a far better motive; the marriage which was to be cemented between the Duke of Albemarle and me, was a union of interest, projected by our friends, without consulting our inclinations, and from the first moment I was informed of the circumstance, I determined that it should never take place. Until very lately, I imagined that my fortune would be the forfeit of my disobedience; but I have lately been better

informed, and I determined to be revenged of Lord Somertown for the artifice he had used to deceive me, by deceiving him in my turn, and making him come to my wedding without marrying his nephew ; I felt perfectly satisfied, that the Duke would feel no disappointment in losing me, and therefore I have kept him in ignorance until this moment, for he believed when he took my hand just now, that it was my intention to marry him. That, however, is no longer in my power, as I was married this morning to Sir Everard Mornington, the bands were regularly published, and we have been legally married at our parish church, as that certificate will shew," producing one as she spoke

"One thing, however," said Lord Somertown, interrupting Amelia, one

thing however, your sagacity has overlooked, the signature of the marriage articles, will at least entitle Henry to half your fortune, madam."

"No, my Lord," replied Amelia, "It is your Lordship's sagacity that was faulty *there*, the marriage articles that were signed yesterday, were made in Sir Everard Mornington's name, the signatures were duly placed, and the deeds sealed and executed in your Lordship's presence, and ratified by your Lordship's sign manual, secure to him and his heir, for ever; the same proportion of my fortune as would have belonged to the Duke of Albermarle, had the writings been draw up in his Graces's name."

Lord Somertown stamped his foot in a paroxism of rage. The bishop again waved his hand to stop the

torrent of passion, which he saw ready to burst from the lips of the angry nobleman.

“ I repeat,” said the reverend Prelate, that it was extremely reprehensible, to defer this explanation until now, nor have you yet adduced any thing in your argument to acquit you of your levity, I censured ; surely madam, this declaration might as well have been made at the signature of the articles, as at this moment.”

“ No my Lord,” replied Amelia, “ I was then a *minor*, and some effectual step would have been taken, to prevent what I have now accomplished, I am of *age* to-day, and the first act of my majority was to bestow my hand where my heart was already ; I could not with *prudence* venture on an explanation sooner, nor could I consistent with *truth* defer it any

longer, I shall now take my leave of this kind assembly, who having met expressly to celebrate my nuptials, cannot surely refuse their congratulations on their happy completion, so much to my own satisfaction ; my *husband* is waiting for me in a carriage at the door, I particularly requested him not to enter the house, as I feared some altercation might take place in the first heat of resentment, which on cooler reflection, will, I am sure, be deemed useless and ridiculous, even by Lord Somertown himself."

" Lord Somertown," replied that angry nobleman, " will not so easily be appeased as you may imagine, madam, he will find an opportunity of calling to an account the dastardly incendiary, whose cowardice is now

sheltered by the audacity of his wife."

"Nay, never *threaten*, my good Lord," replied Amelia, smiling contemptuously, "if you meddle with Sir Everard, you will find him no *coward*, the disparity of your ages will insure your own safety, for he would not lift his hand against an old man; but take care how you attempt any *bravo* expedition against him, you may not be so fortunate as your father was, in the *Kensington Gardens affair*, Lord Durham fell without investigation of the cause of his death, by those who had a right to make it; but suspicion with her thousand tongues has whispered dreadful things;" come, continued she, turning to the Duke, and offering her hand to him with a smile, "you may safely receive this

now, so lead me gallantly down stairs," then turning to the company, she repeated the last lines of Lady Heron's song

"*She is won, we are gone over*
 "They have fleet steeds that follow,
 cry'd young Lochinvar."

The Duke mechanically took the offered hand, and led the intrepid Amelia to the carriage that waited for her, whilst the group she had left behind her, stood looking upon each other in speechless astonishment.

"A thousand blessings attend you, lovely Amelia," said the Duke, as he assisted Lady Mornington to ascend the dashing vehicle, "a thousand blessings attend you, and may you be as happy, as you have made me."

“ Thank you, thank you, ” replied she, smiling, “ I am glad you are in a good humour with me again ; for you have looked so *husband-like* for this fortnight past, that you made me hesitate whether I should become a wife or not.”

Sir Everard Mornington received his lovely bride with rapture, and bowing to the Duke, the gay barouche with four beautiful grey horses dashed off in the true stile of *prime* driving, and the Duke returned to the party above stairs.

“ You are very *humble* to your jilt of a mistress, Henry,” said Lord Somertown, to his nephew, “ for *my* part, I would sooner have *kicked* than *handed* her down stairs, she carries things with a high hand just now, but I will see whether there is not some redress to be obtained for the insults

she has offered me, there is a great deal of connivance in the whole affair," added he, glancing a look of displeasure at the Marquis of Petersfield, "but I had no right to expect any thing else from a *Trentham*; the Marquis was a weak man, and had always felt afraid of Lord Somertown, he therefore attempted an explanation, but Lord Somertown refused to listen to it, and ringing for his carriage, he made a stiff bow to the company, and left the house; as he was quitting the room, he turned to his nephew, and said, in a sarcastic tone, "you may accompany me if you please, but not unless you feel inclined to do so; perhaps it might be more agreeable to you to stay here, and celebrate the nuptials of the Amazonian fury, who has just jilted you."

The Duke made no answer to this

angry speech, except by following his uncle down stairs. During the whole of their drive home, neither party uttered a syllable, and when they arrived in Hanover Square, they retired to their respective apartments. At dinner time, the Duke was astonished to find his uncle in the most perfect good humour possible, with not a cloud remaining upon his countenance. As soon as the cloth was removed, and the servants withdrawn, Lord Somertown told his nephew, that he had been weighing matters in his own mind, and upon mature consideration, he did not see that cause for regret, in the loss of Miss Stanhope, which he was at first inclined to indulge in: "Her fortune, ample as it is, would not be an equivalent," said he, "for the torment of being married to such a virago: by heavens,

I am glad you have escaped her, Henry; I never was so disgusted with any woman before: I *like* none of her worthless sex, but I *hate* her. Now tell me, honestly, are you not glad, she has served you this trick?"

"I am certainly not *sorry*," answered the Duke, "because my heart being engaged to another, Miss Stanhope's merits are lost upon me!"

"It is, indeed, a pity any one should be blind to her superlative merits," answered Lord Somertown, "I hope the *coachman* baronet she has married, will be sensible of her worth, and make her *sensible* of his — He will not do her justice, if he spares his *horse-whip*, but she is beneath my notice, I intend her *one* mortification, and then I shall have done with her; I know nothing will vex her equal to your marrying directly, her vanity would be

gratified, by having it supposed, that you were dying of pique at her her cruelty ; I will therefore give my consent for your marrying that pretty girl, whose charms made such an impression upon you, whilst she was in town, I mean *Fanny*, the *nameless* beauty. You seem thunderstruck ; what don't you understand me ?”

“I am indeed astonished,” answered the Duke, “at such a sudden revolution, in your Lordship's opinion.”

“Well then, you may suspend your astonishment, and prepare to set out for Pemberton Abbey next week, do not defer it any longer, lest Hamilton should forestall you there, as Sir Everard Mornington has done here. I understand he has gone down after her ; but you know, I suppose, whether the girl is inclined to favor your suit in preference to his ;

if she is, you have *my* leave to address her; does the booby understand me? you look as if you had lost your powers of comprehension."

"I am indeed, so wonderstruck," replied the Duke, "that I can hardly trust the evidence of my senses."

"Are you willing that it should be as I say?" asked Lord Somertown.

"Most assuredly I am, answered the Duke, "but feel afraid to indulge in the hopes your Lordship has awakened, lest they should lead to disappointment."

"Nay then, if that be all, fear nothing," rejoined Lord Somertown, "you ought to know me by this time, that what I *promise*, I generally perform. Set out, therefore, to-morrow for Pemberton Abbey, and if Hamilton has not yet married the girl, take her, for your wife, you have my

consent, I tell you, but let me hear nothing further *now* upon the silly subject."

The Duke was going to reply, but Lord Somertown's eye reproved him, and he merely bowed, and left the room. He retired to his own apartment, and rang for his servant to give orders respecting his intended journey, which he determined to commence the first day of the ensuing week. Yet still amidst preparations that seemed calculated to fill his heart with joy: a strange presentiment of evil intruded itself upon his mind. This newly adopted scheme of his uncle's was so sudden, that he could not help fearing some deep design was concealed beneath the specious covering of pretended indulgence. Full well did he know, that a wish to give pleasure, had never yet pervaded his

uncle's heart. He was sure, therefore, that he must have some malicious end in view, in consenting to his addressing Fanny; and he feared, that of mortifying Amelia, was not a motive sufficiently strong, to induce him to take the step he had done. But although the Duke's mind was thus harrassed by conjectures, the most painful, he was obliged to act, as if satisfied that Lord Somertown's intentions towards him, were actuated by the purest benevolence.

To these conjectures, we will now leave him, and return to Pemberton Abbey, where we left poor Fanny apostrophising the senseless shades of her distant friends, and vainly calling upon them for the assistance she wanted.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Father.

ONE night, when Fanny was retiring to rest, she found a sealed note upon her toilet, superscribed to herself; surprise and something like fear seized her mind as, with trembling hand, she broke the seal of this mysterious address. For mysterious it must appear that a note should be left upon her dressing-table, in a place where she knew nobody beyond the walls of the house she inhabited.

On opening the paper she found it was from Mr. Hamilton; it contained the following words:

“I have kept my word, and am now an inhabitant of the house that contains you; this assertion startles you no doubt; but when we meet I will explain the mystery to your satisfaction. I have now no doubts remaining respecting who you are, neither will you, when you hear the wonders I have to relate to you.

Be not alarmed at my entering your chamber, to-morrow night, at twelve o'clock, I shall then conduct you to an old friend who will convince you that you are indeed my daughter; yes, beloved Fanny, you have found a father in the man, who now *uses* the name of *Hamilton!*

“Merciful heaven!” exclaimed Fanny, lifting up her hands, and dropping the note which had excited such emotion in her heart. “Can it then be, that I have found a parent? All

powerful nature! it was thy voice that spoke within me, when first I beheld the author of my being; it was thy power that called forth my affliction with such irresistible force, and bid me love, before I knew my father! Alas! how shall I bear the agitation that now harrows up my feelings for so many hours as those that must intervene before the time appointed for our meeting?"

Full of emotions such as these, poor Fanny paced up and down her chamber, forgetful of the warning night, and incapable of calming her perturbed imagination. Sometimes she felt such an extacy of joy, that she could scarcely flatter herself the picture her fancy drew of the happiness awaiting her, could really be a true one. A doubt would then obtrude itself, that perhaps this was

some artifice to ensnare her, and she recollected with dismay, that Mr. Hamilton was a total stranger to her, and that whatever might be the instinctive affection she had felt for him, she had yet no *certain* proof that he was worthy of the confidence she must repose in him, when she was called upon to commit herself to his guidance, at the dead hour of the night, and suffer him to lead her to some sequestered spot, impervious to the knowledge even of those who inhabited the same house.

These were appalling reflections, yet could they not subdue the impulse she felt to obey the summons, and learn her origin from the lips of a *soi-disant* parent.

After several hours spent in the most painful agitation, her wearied frame seemed ready to sink under the

combined powers of emotion and fatigue, and unable any longer to bear up against their force, Fanny threw herself, dressed as she was, upon her bed. A deep slumber soon sealed her senses, and she awoke not, until the sun had been sometime risen. Her first thought on starting from her bed, was to look for Mr. Hamilton's note, which she recollected she had dropt from her hand in the first moment of her astonishment at reading its mysterious contents. She wished to re-peruse it, as she remembered the peculiar manner in which the note concluded, where her father said, he now *used* the name of Hamilton; implying that it was not the one that properly belonged to him.

What Colonel Ross had said of his *pretending* to be a gentleman, and

his former assertion, that he remembered his being tried for swindling, recurred to her remembrance, and helped to encrease her perplexity. As she sought for the note, her eagerness to re-peruse it increased. What then was her consternation and dismay when, having spent about half an hour in the search, she was obliged to yield to the conviction that the paper was no where to be found. At first her terror was excessive, as the loss was as unaccountable as it was unfortunate. That the note had been conveyed out of her room during her sleep, was evident, but by whom, was a point it was impossible to determine, and whoever was in possession of that paper was master of the secret it contained. When, however, Fanny reflected that the note had been placed upon her table by an invis-

ble hand, she concluded that the same person had resumed it whilst her sleep had enabled them to do so unperceived. It was, however, an unpleasant circumstance to feel at the mercy of a being who could enter her chamber at any hour they pleased, and even without her knowledge. She now recalled to mind the circumstance that occurred the first time she spent the holidays at Pemberton Abbey, when she had been awakened in the night by the appearance of her Mamma Sydney, at her bed-side.

The pains that had been taken to convince her that the apparition was the creature of her own imagination, or the effect of a dream had never been able to eradicate the impression it had made upon her mind, and she still retained the most perfect

remembrance of the circumstance. She recollected, too, the mysterious way in which the visitor had disappeared, and the pains Lady Ellencourt had been at to ascertain whether or no there was any private entrance to the apartment Fanny slept in; the result of the investigation had been a conviction that there was no such thing, and that there was no communication from that room but through the door that led to Lady Ellencourt's apartment. The recent occurrence of the note having been placed upon her table, and afterwards removed by the same invisible hand, proved the fallacy of Lady Ellencourt's researches; and she now felt convinced that her infantine ideas respecting Pemberton Abbey being the place of her earliest residence, were perfectly correct. These reflections strength-

ened her reliance upon her newly-found parent; and she longed for the arrival of the important moment, which was to reveal the secret of her birth, hitherto so darkly enveloped in mystery.

The hour of breakfast now approached, and Fanny repaired to her toilet to arrange her dress, and to remove, as much as possible, the traces of emotion and trouble which had been impressed upon her countenance. She succeeded tolerable well, and descended to the breakfast parlour with a face dressed in smiles.

Lady Maria was already there, and as soon as Fanny entered, she called out with a good humoured laugh, "Great news! important news in the London Gazette!"

"What news, dear Lady Maria?" asked Fanny eagerly.

“Miss Stanhope is married, and the town talks of nothing else !”

Fanny’s countenance fell, instantly, as Lady Maria finished the sentence. “She is no longer Miss Stanhope then,” said she, “but Duchess of Albemarle.”

“Oh no,” answered Lady Maria, “you are not at all in the secret ; Amelia is married, but not to the Duke, and there is the mighty wonder of the story.” Lady Maria then read from the newspaper she held in her hand, the chief of those circumstances that have already been related respecting Amelia’s *coup-de-main*, the artifice of substituting deeds drawn in Sir Everard Mornington’s name for the marriage articles, instead of those that had been drawn up for the Duke; was particularly dwelt upon by the newspaper wits,

who styled Lady Mornington *Napoleon* in petticoats!"

Fanny felt comparatively indifferent to any of the particulars, but that which spoke of the rupture of the contract between Amelia and the Duke; that news was doubly welcome now, as her imagination had already been expatiating in the field of probability, and fondly fancying that when her birth was ascertained, it might be found such as did not preclude the possibility of the union her heart was most inclined to wish for.

Of Amelia's partiality for Sir Everard Mornington Fanny had been long convinced, and she rejoiced that her friend's ingenuity had supplied her with the means of so dexterously substituting the man she *did* like for the one for whom she had always expressed the most decided aversion.

The means had, indeed, been such as Fanny could not have adverted to; but the contrast in the dispositions of herself and her friend was striking in almost every other particular, and therefore it was not surprising that they differed in this:

When Colonel Ross came into breakfast, he said, “are there any letters this morning?”

“Oh dear,” replied Lady Maria, “I declare I was so taken up with the newspaper that I forgot the letters; here are several,” added she, “and amongst them two for you, Fanny.”

When Fanny took the letters into her hand, she recognised the writing of her beloved Lady Ellencourt on the superscription of the first she looked at. An exclamation of joy burst from her lips at the welcome

sight and she retired to one of the windows to peruse her treasure. What was her rapture then on reading the following words :—

“ I know you will rejoice my beloved Fanny, to hear that we shall soon embrace you. We have taken our passage on board a ship of war, and are waiting for a convoy. We shall therefore in all probability soon follow this letter ; the distracted state of this country renders a longer residence here extremely dangerous. You may therefore depend upon soon seeing us.”

Fanny could read no farther, but running up to Lady Maria, she put the letter into her hands, then burst into tears.

“ What is the matter, my dear,” said Lady Maria in a tone of alarm.

“ Nothing but joy,” replied Fanny, smiling through her tears. “ My best friends are returning, I shall embrace them once more ; I think *all* my happiness comes together.”

As Fanny pronounced the last words, Colonel Ross cast a penetrating glance towards her that confused her.

“ Have you any *other great* cause for rejoicing ?” said he, “ I hope you rest your dependance upon sure grounds.”

Fanny made no reply, but opening her other letter, she pretended to be deeply engaged with that. It was from Lady Mornington, and written in her accustomed style of giddiness. After recounting the particulars of her manœuvres, which are already known, she wrote as follows :—

“ What does my dear Fanny think of my skill, as a General? Should you not suppose that I had studied under the auspices of the little Corsican? Indeed I am inclined to think I *surpass* him in finesse; and in *stage* effect, my drama is unrivalled. I always told you I meant to dramatize Lady Heron’s song, and so I have, you see, Sir Everard made an excellent young Lochinvar; and he carried me off in the true style of romance. A barouche was substituted for the steed, and that was rather an improvement, as I should not have very well relished the being jumbled upon the crupper of a horse, like Fair Ellen of Netherby, although I felt quite as much inclined to play the heroine as she could; and I must tell you who played their part to the life, too, your friend the Duke of

Albemarle was quite at home in the character of the "*Poor craven Bridegroom,*" for he literally said "*never a word.*" And although he could not stand "dangling his bonnet and plume," because he had not got one, he found an excellent substitute in his watch, which he took out about ten times in a minute, and consulted with as much gravity, as if he was feeling the pulses of all the company. I believe if anybody could have done that kind office sily, they would have found some symptoms of *fever* in two or three of the *bridal throng*, poor Lord Somertown in particular; I really thought the old fellow would have *beaten* me. You never saw such a turkey-cock in your life as he looked, when I made my *daring declaration*; and the good Bishop too, he was preciously angry, and read me such a

lecture upon levity as would have done me good at any other time; but you know the preaching prudence to a person who has just married against her friend's consent, is like a physician prescribing for a *dead patient*. I dare say poor Albemarle had a sound drubbing when his old uncle got the *child* home. By the bye, I think the Duke carries his ideas of subordination a little too far, for he is as much afraid of offending Lord Somertown as any school-boy of his pedagogue. I hope when you have him, you will teach him to be a little more independent; but tameness is unfortunately your failing as well as your lover's, and so I am afraid you will make but a spiritless couple. I believe we must take compassion upon you, and give you a few lessons in the science of independence; Sir

Everard and I are going to write a book, in concert, and the title is to be "Nature reversed: or, the Spirit of England. By this treatise we intend to emancipate the minds of our readers from the silly trammels of prejudice and custom; and shew that children ought to command their parents, tutors, guardians, &c. servants their masters, and wives their husbands; nay, even the brute tribe will find their advantage in this benevolent publication, as it will teach a valuable method of training *rats*, (a certain young nobleman, *it is said, has made this valuable discovery, that rats fed upon live kittens and milk, are a match at close fighting for the stoutest cat that can be found!!!*) to kill cats and thereby deliver that injured part of the creation from the persecution

they have hitherto groaned under. Don't you long to read our learned labor. But my dear, it will take so long composing, revising, and correcting, that you must wait longer than I fear you will like. But however, you shall not remain uninstructed *all* that tedious period. We intend passing the *honey moon* at this place, namely, Mornington Park, in Lancashire, and in our way from hence to London we design to *favor* you with a visit *en passant*, and then we shall see what we can make of you. I make no doubt you will receive a visit from the Duke of A. long before that time ; if you should, pray don't forget to tell him, with my compliments, that I never saw him look *so animated*, as when he blessed me and thanked me at parting for *running away from him.*"—Adieu.

Thus concluded this giddy epistle, and Fanny could not forbear laughing at her lively friend, although her heart did entirely not acquit her of the levity attributed to her conduct by the worthy prelate who had lectured her.

CHAPTER XIX.

*An affecting Interview.*

FANNY'S anxiety to have the mystery of her birth elucidated, made the day appear particularly tedious that intervened between her impatience and the hour appointed by Mr. Hamilton for their nocturnal meeting; yet as the moment approached she felt dismayed and almost unequal to the undertaking. A thousand times was she on the point of making Lady Maria her confidant, yet something withheld her from doing so, although the secret trembled on her lips. The

idea of meeting a stranger *alone* at the dead hour of the night, and confiding herself to his guidance to be led she knew not whither, had something truly terrific in it; yet such was her eagerness to penetrate the mystery that involved her; and such her instinctive reliance upon Mr. Hamilton's integrity, that she kept her resolution of meeting him notwithstanding the well-grounded fears that assailed her. Her stifled emotions however, made her extremely absent, and Colonel Ross remarked it several times in the course of the day with some asperity. Once indeed, he observed in a sarcastic tone that Fanny appeared as full of abstraction as if she were on the eve of some *important event*.

“ One would imagine,” said he, “ that you were going to be *married*

pray is the Duke of Albemarle, or Mr. Hamilton the happy object of your contemplations? or is it your old friend Lord Ellencourt?"

"I have been thinking of them all in their turn," replied Fanny, with a spirit that surprised herself.

"A confession," exclaimed the Colonel; "and pray," added he dryly, "if I *may* ask who is your *nocturnal* visitor? Is it either of the gentlemen just alluded to?"

Fanny's confusion at this abrupt question was extreme, and she was wholly at a loss for an answer: at length, recovering herself in some degree, she said, "As I don't know what visitor you allude to, I cannot satisfy your curiosity, Sir, as to their identity."

"I perceive," replied the Colonel, "that you understand the art of

evasion; but that is natural to your sex. However, take my advice if you will not answer my questions: Beware how you trust yourself to the mercy of a man of whom you know nothing but the specious exterior; and remember that repentance treads close upon the heels of imprudence. So saying, Colonel Ross went out of the room, and left Fanny to form what conjecture she pleases, as to the extent of his information.

Sometimes she was ready to imagine that he knew of Mr. Hamilton's mysterious note; but she instantly rejected the idea, because that note had been but a short time in her own possession, and must have been conveyed away by the same means it had been brought thither. Some secret way of entering her chamber was evidently possessed by Mr. Hamilton,

and with that it was impossible Colonel Ross could be acquainted.

At length the important hour arrived, and Fanny retired to her apartment, and sat with palpitating heart, expecting her mysterious visitor. The large clock over the stables had struck twelve some time, and yet he did not appear.

As the moment seemed to approach, Fanny's courage expired ; and to such a pitch of terror had her perturbed imagination wrought itself, that she was just on the point of flying to Lady Maria's apartment for refuge from the appearance she now dreaded, when a crackling noise behind her made her start and turn round. A large looking-glass was fixed in the jam between the window and the chimney, its old-fashioned frame, curiously wrought, forming the cornice

of the compartment, appearing to have been stationary in that spot ever since the building of the house, as many of its rude ornaments corresponded exactly with the antique cornice that bordered the ceiling. The part of the wall, where the glass was fixed appeared perfectly solid, not being covered like the other parts with wainscoting. How great, then, was Fanny's astonishment, when she saw the frame open like a door, and Mr. Hamilton entering from the aperture. He advanced towards her, and took her trembling hand :

“ Be not dismayed, my precious child,” said he tenderly ; “ you are in the guardianship of your best friend. I can allow for this terror, however ; it is very natural that your gentle nature should be alarmed at the appearance of mystery that in-

volves the approaches of your parent. But there is reason for the caution, as you will readily allow when you have heard my eventful story. Fear not to trust yourself to my guidance. I will lead you to the friend of your infancy, and I doubt not that her testimony will do away every remaining doubt.

Fanny passed through the secret door in silence, and her guide replaced and shut it with a spring; then resuming the hand of the trembling girl, he led her, without speaking, down a long flight of narrow stairs, which terminated in a long passage, so excessively low and narrow, that it was difficult in many parts for Mr. Hamilton to pass; but Fanny's Sylph-like form glided through its most acute turnings with ease, whilst her agitated feelings

made her movement rapid as the wind.

At length a door opposed their progress; Mr. Hamilton rapped three distinct times, and presently it was opened, and they entered a small apartment through which they passed into one of larger dimensions, where there were two candles upon a table,

Fanny now distinguished the face of the person who had let them in, and to her unspeakable astonishment beheld the long forgotten features of her "*Mamma Sydney.*"

The old lady pressed the trembling Fanny to her bosom, and sobbed aloud.

"And does my dear child recollect me at last?" said she. "Yes, I perceive you do; those intelligent eyes beam upon me with all your mother's sweetness."

“ But you look terrified, my love,” added the old lady in a tone of tender concern. “ This agitation is too much for the dear child, Orlando,” turning to Mr. Hamilton; “ let her rest herself a little, before we ask her any questions.”

Fanny now seated herself on a chair, between Mr. Hamilton and her Mamma Sydney, and yielding to the emotions that oppressed her almost to suffocation, she burst into tears. Her two friends suffered her to weep, without interruption, until the violence of her feelings gradually subsided.

The old lady then began to interrogate Fanny as to her recollection of herself, and those who surrounded her, prior to her being placed at Miss Bridgeman's.

Fanny related what she had before

said to Lady Ellencourt, the first time of her visiting at Pemberton-Abbey, about her Mamma Sydney, whose image was so forcibly recalled to her remembrance by the apartments she had been wont to inhabit with her. She mentioned, too, her terror at seeing her Mamma Sydney in the middle of the night, whilst sleeping near Lady Ellencourt, in the very same apartment she now inhabited, and described the pains Lady Ellencourt took, to ascertain whether there were any secret entrance to the room, concealed in the wainscoting, and the result of that investigation. "I have often tried, since that period," said Fanny, "to persuade myself that my terror had proceeded from a dream, but always found it impossible to divest my mind of the certainty that impressed it, of my

having seen you madam. Lady Ellencourt was so thoroughly convinced, from the examination of the apartment, that nobody *could* enter it, excepting through her room, that she always treated my account of your appearance as the effect of fancy, aided by a dream. How often have the conjectures arising from my reflections upon that puzzling subject, beguiled me of my rest; and I have been, at times, almost tempted to believe, that what I had beheld was a supernatural being.”

“The mystery is now cleared up,” replied the old lady, “as far as relates to the apparition; for I, *indeed*, appeared to you, and pressed your rosy cheek with my lips, before you were conscious of my approach;—that imprudent action awakened you; and the shrieks you uttered

imparted the terror I had occasioned you to my own heart."

"But tell me, dear and honored Madam," interrupted Fanny, with a look of earnest supplication, "Oh, tell me who you are, and give ease to my agitated heart, by informing me who I belong to:" and as she spoke, she turned her expressive eyes, swimming in tears, upon Mr. Hamilton.

He arose, and taking her in his arms: "My Emily! my murdered Emily!" exclaimed he, pressing the weeping girl to his bosom; "yes, thou art, indeed, my daughter! every feature in that lovely face recalls thy sainted mother."

"I have then *no mother?*" faintly articulated Fanny, then dropping on her knees at the feet of her newly found father. She clasped her hands together, and raising her streaming

eyes to his face, she exclaimed, "Receive, then, most honored of human beings, the homage of an affectionate heart, that has long panted to embrace its parents. I have only one! Oh, let me then bestow on that one, the duty and affection due to both."

Mr. Hamilton raised the lovely girl and embraced her. "What a moment is this?" said he. "Methinks I hold my Emily once more to my bleeding heart! And so I do: for although you, my child, are not named after your unfortunate mother, it is impossible to behold you, and not be struck with your resemblance to her. The name of Fanny was given you in preference to Emily, the better to conceal you from your cruel persecutors. It has had the desired effect; and my child is preserved to bless her doating father;

and I shall yet see her assert a right to the rank of her ancestors, and rise superior to the malice of her enemies. But time wears, and I forget that my child is anxious to know the elucidation of the mystery that now veils her birth:—the story is mournful; but she for whose sake your tender heart will weep at the recital, has long ceased to suffer, and we must look for her in the realms of bliss, not in this dreary vale of sorrow and disappointment. Keep this in mind, my love, and let it soften the anguish your filial tenderness must inflict upon you, during the recital of the tale of woe:—

CHAPTER XX.

*A Mournful Story.*

“MY mother was the sole heiress to an immense fortune, with the title and estates of a dukedom entailed upon her eldest son. Her mother was sister to Lord Somertown; and it was always the design of that avaricious and vindictive nobleman to unite his son to my mother. She was accordingly kept very much precluded in the early part of her life, to prevent her forming any attachment before Lord Sheldon returned from his travels. This very precaution, however, was the occasion of her doing so; for in the

retirement she lived in with her governess, she became acquainted with my father, who was then just inducted into the living of D——, the village adjacent to Canington Park, the seat where my mother resided.

“Whether the governess countenanced the attachment, I cannot tell; but be that as it may, the consequence was a clandestine marriage, and when Lord Sheldon came home to claim his bride, she confessed herself already the wife of another.

“It is impossible to describe the rage and fury of Lord Somertown, when informed of his niece’s delinquency. He vowed the most unrelenting vengeance, and immediately took every step to punish Mr. Evelyn, her unfortunate husband, and distress Lady Lucy, that was my mother’s name. A process was commenced

against him, in the Court of Chancery, for stealing an heiress; and although, by the testimony of my mother, it was proved beyond a doubt, that the act was entirely her own, and his life thereby preserved; yet the expences incurred by the law-suit, ill agreeing with his narrow circumstances, he was thrown into prison, where he languished the remaining years of my mother's minority. Nor was her confinement less rigid than her husband's, as she was kept a close prisoner by her inexorable guardian, and every motion strictly watched, lest she should convey any assistance to my father.

“My birth, which happened a few months after the discovery of the fatal secret, increased my mother's distress; and the terror lest I should fall into the merciless hands of her uncle

nearly proved fatal to her during her lying-in. I escaped the jaws of the lion, and was conveyed by a faithful servant of my mother's to a safe asylum.

“ My father had a sister who was married to a Mr. Hamilton, but who, together with her husband, was abroad at this trying moment. To her my father had written an account of every thing relating to his unhappy marriage, excepting his pecuniary embarrassments; a gaol being preferable, in his eyes, to the idea of dependance. His pathetic discription of Lady Lucy's situation, and his account of Lord Somertown's cruelty, alarmed his sister, and she wrote immediately to a friend she could rely upon, and desired her to find means to inform my mother that there was a friend, she might safely trust, ready

to receive her child, should she wish to place it out of the reach of her cruel uncle.

“ My mother most thankfully embraced the offer ; and I was accordingly torn from my weeping parent’s bosom, and conveyed to the asylum that had been prepared for me.

“ Lord Somertown was outrageous when he found his victim had escaped him ; and he spared no pains nor expence to find out my retreat. In this, however, he was disappointed, for my watchful friend had me conveyed to my aunt, at Jamacia, as soon as my tender age admitted of my undertaking such journey. There I remained until my mother came of age, at which period she effected her escape from the confinement in which she had been kept upwards of four years.

“The first use she made of her liberty, was to restore that of my father; and they were re-married at St. George’s, Hanover-square, in the most public manner possible. The immense fortune to which they now acceded, promised them every enjoyment this life can afford; but all their pleasures seemed imperfect, whilst separated from their beloved child.

“My Aunt, at this time, returned to England, and came to reside at this very house.

“In this place I was first conscious of the embraces of my parents, and had I no other reason, that single recollection would endear Pemberton Abbey to my heart. I was soon however removed to the splendid seat of my ancestors, and became the prime object of solicitude to all those that

surrounded me, and I must here candidly confess that had the sunshine of prosperity continued unclouded, the very essence of my being would have been lost in slothful insanity of mind, and the best feelings of my heart stifled by a selfish regard to my own convenience. But I was intended for a life of trial, and my sufferings commenced at an early period. My mother who had always been extremely delicate, died when I was no more than twelve years old, and my father was immediately involved in a Chancery suit, by a claimant to the estate and title to which I was lawful heir. Lord Somertown's malice to my mother, which survived her, induced him to support the claim of this pretender, and as his lordship had taken care to destroy the evidences of Lady Lucy Darnley's first

marriage with Mr. Evelyn, which had been celebrated with all its proper forms and the banns regularly published, by suborning the clerk to tear the leaf containing the register out of the church books, the marriage could not be proved, and I was bastardised by my own mother's uncle, and our cause fell to the ground. My father's grief and distress may be imagined. It took such an effect upon his health that he survived my mother only two years. Destitute as I now was of fortune and rank, I yet never wanted a friend; my uncle, Mr. Hamilton, received me into his house, and treated me like his son, and from that time I assumed his name. A secret hope always pervaded my mind that Lord Somertown's heart would be touched with remorse for his injustice to me, and that he would restore me to

my just rights by permitting the man to return who had been sent abroad by his means, and whose testimony as a witness to the marriage would have been sufficient to re-instate me in the privileges he had deprived me of.

“ In this expectation, however, I was deceived; his malice still pursued me, and although he did not know that I had assumed the name of Hamilton, nor been able to ascertain what asylum sheltered me, his endeavors to penetrate the mystery never relaxed, until a report of my death being industriously spread by my friends, his lordship rejoicing in the extinction of his enemy, deemed himself happy in the consummation of his wishes; the present Duke of Albemarle's father was then the possessor of my just rights, and Lord Somertown, who stood in

the same relationship to him as to my mother, was afterwards appointed guardian to his son, the present Duke, by his will made on his death-bed. Of my relationship, or connection with Mr. Hamilton, Lord Somertown heard nothing, as he had always been too proud to investigate my father's family; and the report of my death precluded suspicion. I grew up, therefore, in the neighbourhood of his family seat without his ever entertaining an idea of my existence. When I was about nineteen, I came home for the summer vacation from Oxford, and Mr. Hamilton received me with more than usual satisfaction in his countenance."

"I am far from despairing," said he, "of seeing you restored to your just rights, if your inclinations should lead you to second my wishes; but remember, before I communicate

what those wishes are, I disclaim all intention of putting the least force upon your affections."

I was at a loss to guess what this prelude was to lead to ; but my good unclé soon put the matter past a doubt, by telling me that Lord Somertown had a grand-daughter that resided with him, who was the most beautiful creature he ever beheld, but whose birth was attended with such circumstances of misfortune, that it was but too probable his lordship might find it difficult to marry her to his satisfaction. " You," added my uncle, " are supposed to be my son ; your fortune in that case must be immense. Lord S—— does not suspect who you really are, and as no reasonable objection can be made either to your family or fortune in your present character, I intend to

propose the alliance, provided you should be as much enchanted with the lovely Emily as I am ; if you are accepted, it will be an agreeable surprise to Lord S—— to find, when you have married his grand-daughter that you are the lawful heir of such rank and fortune, as that which certainly belongs to you, nor do I entertain a doubt that he will immediately produce such proofs as will re-instate you in your rights.”

This scheme appeared so romantic, and my dislike to Lord Somertown was so deeply rooted in my heart, that I could scarcely have patience to hear my uncle to the end of his speech ; when he paused, I said, “ you leave me free to do as I like my dear sir,” said I, “ and therefore I decline having any thing to do with such a wretch as Lord S——, let him

keep his malice and leave me my resentment. I could not love a grand-daughter of his, I am sure, were she as beautiful as Hebe. Vain boast ! of the fallacy of which I was soon after made sensible. The lovely Emily was kept in such seclusion, that it might almost be styled captivity; all the privilege she enjoyed, beyond the state of a prisoner, being the liberty of walking sometimes in her grandfather's Park, and even that indulgence was restricted to an early hour in the morning. During these rambles, she was attended by the governess who had brought her up, and who doated upon her. It chanced one morning in the shooting season, that I had strolled near the precincts of Sheldon Park. My dogs sprung a covey of partridges who, in their flight, made towards a small

inclosure adjoining to the Park gate, the interior of which was skreened from my view by a plantation of young trees. With the eagerness of a young sportsman I discharged my gun, and was preparing to climb the fence in search of my game, when loud shrieks from within, filled me with consternation and dismay. I scarcely knew how I got to the spot from whence they proceeded; but when I reached it, my terror was increased, rather than diminished, for I beheld a female figure stretched on the ground, covered with blood, and apparently lifeless, whilst another was bending over her in an agony of terror, not to be described. I too plainly perceived that *I* was the unfortunate cause of the accident, and I hastened to offer my assistance to the distressed lady. She raised her head

to thank me, and discovered a countenance in which was drawn the strongest picture of grief I ever beheld.

‘My beloved child,’ exclaimed she, ‘is wounded, I fear mortally, let me intreat you, Sir, to assist me in conveying her to the Porter’s Lodge, which is not far from hence.’ I stooped to lift the young lady from the ground; her hat had fallen off, and her face was shaded by her redundant locks; but when, with the assistance of the elderly lady, I raised her from her lowly-bed, Heavens! what a beauty struck my senses. Pale as she was, with disshevelled locks, and her garments stained with the crimson stream of her blood; yet was she the most lovely object I had ever beheld. My heart died within me, as I bore the lifeless burthen to the place her governess had pointed

out to me, for I firmly believed she had breathed her last. When we reached the Porter's Lodge, the lovely Emily, (for it was herself,) was laid upon a bed, and a man dispatched on horse-back, to fetch the nearest surgeon, a distance of three miles. I will not pretend to describe the agony I suffered during the time the sweet girl remained in a lifeless state. I stood, the very image of despair, close to the door of the chamber in which she was laid, waiting the sentence of my future happiness or misery. At length I had the unspeakable joy of hearing the delightful exclamation from her attendants, that she revived; and shortly afterwards my rapture was increased by the silver tones of her own sweet voice, enquiring where she was. Her governess then came to me, and assured me that Miss

Hincheliffe (that was the name my Emily bore,) was much better, and that she could venture to pronounce, without seeing the surgeon, that the wounds she had received, were of no material consequence.

“My joy was now as extravagant as my grief had been acute, and I was almost in a delirium, from the excess of the emotion I had suffered. When the surgeon arrived, his testimony confirmed Mrs. Bolton’s favourable opinion, for he pronounced the wounds which were in the fleshy part of the arm not at all dangerous, and assured us, that the fainting fit, in which the lovely Emily had lain so long, was occasioned by terror more than by loss of blood.

“Time will not permit me to dwell on the events that followed this accident, by which I was introduced

to the arbitress of my fate, and became enamoured of the very woman; I had declared to my uncle I could never love.

“ The distress I had shewn on this occasion, excited an interest for me in the heart of the beautiful Emily; at first, the excuse of enquiring after her health, and entreating her to forgive the injury I had so unwittingly done her, served to apologize for the liberty I took in way-laying her morning rambles; by degrees she appeared to expect my visits, and soon ventured gently to reproach my negligence, if by any accident I was later than usual in making my appearance. Mrs. Bolton, who longed for the emancipation of her pupil, from the tyranny she groaned under, gave every encouragement to my addresses, and by this imprudent act, laid the foundation for the future

misery of the person she loved best in the world. To be brief, our attachment was mutual, and we exchanged vows of unalterable fidelity to each other; I now entreated my uncle to make the proposal to Lord Somertown, he had before suggested, explaining to him at the same time, the cause of this sudden change in my opinions. My uncle shrugged up his shoulders and sighed."

"How perverse is human nature," said he, "what is attainable, we always despise, whilst those things that are beyond our reach, are generally the objects of our wishes. At the time I proposed the alliance to you, there appeared no impediment to the union, you then was averse to the proposal, and I let the subject drop; little supposing you would happen to wish to

renew it at a moment when I am convinced it is impossible; Lord Somertown's inflexibility to all endeavours at thwarting his will, is almost proverbial; whatever he has said shall be, is like the laws of the Medes and Persians, 'which altereth not.' An attempt therefore to turn him from his designs is really a kin to madness. I have just learnt, from undoubted authority, that there is an alliance for his grand-daughter now on the *tapis*: the lover is Lord Ballafyn, of Ballafyn Castle, in Ireland, and as he has never seen the lady, it must be the fortune the grand father has promised her, that is the object of his affections. I was struck dumb by this intelligence, and almost ready to sink into the ground. As soon as I had recovered myself a little, however, I entreated my uncle not to let

a vague report; which might originate in the fertile brain of some gossiping match-maker defer him from making the proposal, I was now so eager about; adding, with all the sanguine confidence of a youthful lover, that as my fortune exceeded that of Lord B. it was more than probable, if money was Lord Somertown's object, he might be inclined to favor my suit in preference to his Lordship's. My uncle shook his head, but; nevertheless, promised to make the application. He did so, and was rejected in the most positive terms by Lord Somertown, who assured him, that Miss Hincheliffe was disposed of already; 'she knows nothing of my intentions as yet,' added his Lordship sternly, 'but it is time enough. When she knows my will, she *must* obey it. I am therefore, in

no doubt about what *she* may think of the proposal. Her business is to obey not to *question*." When my uncle conveyed this fatal news to me, my agony was beyond expression, and it was a long time before I could give utterance to my feelings, when I did speak, it was only to renew my vows of never marrying any body but Emily. My uncle entreated me to abandon all ideas of so mad an intention, and recalled to my remembrance the sorrows of my unfortunate parents, as well as those of the hapless Emily. This argument had no weight however with me, misery appeared in no way so certain as in a separation from her I loved; and could I but obtain the object of my affection the *world* appeared a cheap price to pay for such an inestimable treasure. When I had an opportunity of conversing with Emily,

and imparting my sentiments to her upon our cruel situation, it was some consolation to me, to find her as willing as myself to brave the frowns of the world, and the dangers of poverty, rather than relinquish the sweet hope of being united. The same romantic affection inspired us both, and under its dangerous influence, we acted so as to entail irremediable evil on ourselves and our offspring. Lord Somertown had not the smallest suspicion of our attachment, and imagined that my uncle's proposal, whose son he supposed me to be, had been made for the alliance, with a view of aggrandising his family; this unfortunate blindness on Lord Somertown's part was but too favorable to our secret correspondence; and we continued to meet without hindrance or suspicion. At length the

dreaded proposal was made, in person, by Lord Ballafyn, and his Lordship introduced to Emily, who was informed, by her grandfather, that she must look upon his Lordship as her future husband without a single question being asked her, whether he was agreeable to her or not.

“ The day after this dreadful meeting, my beloved Emily appeared in such distress and terror of mind, that it drove me almost to madness, and in the insanity of the moment, I proposed a clandestine marriage to her. There is not said I, any danger of our union being set aside, if we can once accomplish it, as I am of age; and it will be easy to get the banns published without Lord Somertown’s knowledge, who never goes to church. Emily listened to me with complacency, and I soon prevailed with her to consent

to the measure, which was immediately adopted, I gave a very large sum of money to the clergyman and also to the clerk, and by that means obtained the secrecy I wished for; the former had a great impediment in his speech, which defect he managed so dexterously, as to render our names totally unintelligible to the congregation: our being asked in church was unnoticed, a circumstance that was considerably assisted by several other couples being asked at the same time. Not long afterwards, during a short absence of Lord Somertown, from Sheldon Park, we were married, and fondly flattered ourselves that we were now safe from the tyranny we dreaded: alas! we had for ever riveted the chains that bound us, and given our enemies a power to hurt us, they could not

otherwise have possessed. About three months after our marriage, Emily received orders to prepare herself to become a bride, and she was directed to make the necessary purchases for her nuptials. It was in vain, that the poor girl, implored her inexorable parent to listen to her for a few minutes, he spurned her from him, telling her that no reply was necessary on her part, as she had nothing to do now, she knew his will, but to obey it. Lord Sheldon, said he, is coming from Saxony, whither he had been sent on a diplomatic mission; and when he returns, your marriage will take place immediately. Lord Ballafyn intends being here the latter end of this month, and I desire, as you value your future happiness, to clear up that dismal

countenance, and receive him in a manner suitable to my wishes.

Poor Emily could make no reply to this preremptory command, but quitting the room as fast as her trembling limbs would permit her, she sought the refuge of her own chamber, and there on the bosom of her faithful friend, Mrs. Bolton, she poured forth the anguish of her heart; the terror and agitation the sweet girl suffered, on this trying occasion, brought on a most alarming illness, and for many days her life was despaired of. Think what must have been my sufferings, when I knew that the beloved object of all my hopes, in this world, lay at the point of death; and I did not dare to approach her pillow, to whisper one word of tender consolation in her ear. The kind-hearted Mrs. Bolton did all she

could to mitigate my anxiety, and gave me regular information three or four times a day: and every night, during my Emily's extreme danger, I watched beneath her window, disguised in the coarse frock and slouched hat of a ploughman, who being frequently employed to watch the poachers, excited no suspicions by being seen lurking about in the dead of the night.

“ At length the sweet creature was restored to my prayers; and I received the heart-soothing-tidings of her safety and amended health. This joyful event was followed by another, which appeared to promise us the confirmation of our happiness; I mean the death of Lord Somertown, which happened suddenly, just before Lord Ballafyn's expected arrival. I will not repeat the gay visions of

happiness that floated on my brain when I heard of an event so propitious to our hopes of liberty; as I never entertained a fear that Lord Sheldon could resemble his father so closely as I have since found, to my sorrow, that he did.

“The death of Lord Somertown put a stop to all ideas of the proposed alliance with Lord B——, for some time; and as the new Lord was still detained abroad, by his diplomatic functions, Emily was left for several months to follow the bent of her own inclination. It may easily be supposed, that it was the society of her husband she would seek, under such circumstances; and many a half gone hour have we spent together, in these very apartments; whose private communications with Pemberton Abbey had been but lately discovered by a

servant of mine, who informed me of it, and shewed me the secret spring that closed the mysterious pannel. As a reward for so valuable a discovery, I settled fifty pounds a year upon the man, and gave him that small house to live in: and with the assistance of his wife, and the worthy Mrs. Bolton, whom you have hitherto known by the name of your Mamma Sydney. Your beloved mother, in this secluded asylum, gave birth to a lovely infant, who was immediately baptised by the name of Fanny. And such were the precautions adverted to, on this occasion, that not the slightest suspicions were awakened amongst the domestics, at Sheldon Park, who were all, excepting one confidential servant, wholly ignorant of my Emily's absence. As soon as her weakness would permit, she re-

turned to her home, but you were left here with your nurse, the wife of my servant.

“ We now awaited Lord Sheldon’s return, with the utmost impatience, as we had come to the resolution of declaring our marriage to him at the first interview. Alas! had we known the horrors that would be the consequence of his return, we should have fled to some distant climate, whilst the possibility of flight remained within our power. Such, however, was our infatuation, that we dreamt not of our danger until the dark cloud of irremediable misfortune burst over our devoted heads, and crushed us for ever. But I will not dwell upon this dreadful part of my narrative.

“ As soon as Lord Somertown arrived in London, he wrote to his niece, to inform her that the nuptials, which

he was sorry had been so long delayed on *his* account, should be solemnized immediately ; and that it was his intention to be at Sheldon Park in ten days, from the date of his letter.

“ When Emily communicated this unwelcome news to me, my mind suggested the propriety of immediately informing Lord Somertown of our marriage, and entreating his sanction to it, as I judged it would only exasperate him the more, to suffer him to come down in the country under such erroneous ideas.

“ I accordingly wrote to him upon the subject, with an eloquence that would have moved any heart but his own ; his answer was couched in terms the most friendly, and contained only a very slight stricture upon secret marriages, which he said, were but too often the cause of

much unhappiness in families, adding, that he hoped our's would not prove of that description. His Lordship requested my immediate presence in London, as he said, it was necessary we should have some conversation together, previous to his visiting the country: and he concluded his letter with every assurance of the most cordial friendship.

“ This was so much above my hopes, that I was in extacies, and my Emily was several times obliged to check my transports. Indeed, her apparent apathy soon moderated my joy, for I saw she did not seem to exult as I did; and if any thing *could* have made me angry with that angel, I should have been so on that occasion; for I was disappointed at her coldness.

“ Alas! her's was a presentiment of

evil, which the subsequent events too soon justified.

“ To be brief, I tore myself away from the dearer part of my soul, and commenced my ill-fated journey full of the most pleasing expectations, little imagining I had seen my Emily for the last time. When I arrived in London, I waited upon Lord Somertown immediately, and was received with the utmost cordiality. As soon as the first compliments were over, I began speaking upon the subject of settlements, and as my uncle had authorised me to do, I made the most liberal offers. Lord Somertown seemed rather to evade than press the subject, and he once said, with rather a mysterious air, there are some circumstances with which I am acquainted, that perhaps you do not suspect are known to me; on some future day we will talk upon

those matters, as I should wish the *real* rank of the man my niece marries should be known to the world. I caught at this insinuation, and assured his lordship, that from that moment I could have no secrets with a friend so nearly allied to me. Not *now*, said he, nodding significantly, 'but the time is not far distant, when the confidence will be mutual.'

"There was something in Lord Somertown's manner of pronouncing these words that did not please me; yet, as I could not make any objection to what he said, I was obliged to be silent.

"I wrote an account of this interview to my adored Emily, and also to my uncle. A few days after this I received a note from Lord Somertown, requesting me to dine with him at his villa, on the banks of the Thames, near Richmond, as he had

some business to transact with me of the utmost importance. I obeyed the fatal summons with alacrity, and reached the appointed place just as dinner was ready.

“ Lord Somertown welcomed me by a cordial shake of the hand, assuring me that I had made him happy by this ready compliance with his request; ‘and I trust,’ added he, with a smile, ‘that you will confess before we part that I am not your debtor. Every thing is arranged for your future welfare in a manner that cannot fail of success.’ I understood by this speech, that Lord Somertown alluded to my claims on the title and estates of Albemarle, and I expressed my warm sense of his kind attention to my interest.

“ ‘Say not a word about it,’ answered he, ‘you cannot judge *how much* you are obliged to me, until you know what I have done for you—

The dinner waits, let us defer business until that is over' I followed the *Fiend* to the dining parlour, we dined tête-a-tête, but as the servants waited, not a word passed during dinner. After the cloth was removed I adverted to the subject of our former correspondence, but Lord Somertown pressed me to take some wine with such earnestness, that I could not refuse: glass after glass was forced upon me, which I swallowed much against my inclination, merely to get rid of his importunity.

“ I did not at first perceive that Lord Somertown was not drinking himself, for my mind was so occupied with the ideas that crowded upon it, that I had scarcely any perception of what was passing before me. When, however, I *did* observe it, I declined drinking any more.

“ Your Lordship,” said I laughing,

“ has a design upon me, for you are making me drink, whilst you are abstaining from wine yourself. ‘ There may be reasons,’ answered he, ‘ that may render it more necessary for *you* to take wine, than would stand good for *me*—however, I believe you have taken *enough*,’ added he emphatically, ‘ and therefore you may do as you like about having any more.’

“ There was something very mysterious in Lord Somertown’s manner, but as I had no suspicion of his malice to me, it excited my curiosity without alarming me.

“ After conversing for some time longer upon indifferent subjects, and studiously avoiding the one I wished to lead to, Lord Somertown, after looking earnestly at his watch for some minutes, suddenly started up— ‘ It is time,’ said he ‘ to drop the mask of dissimulation, the drug I

have administered must have taken effect, and I should loose half my vengeance if my victim remained in ignorance of the hand that inflicted the blow.'

“ As Lord Somertown spoke I involuntarily rose from my chair, and a vague presentiment of the truth came over my mind, at least of lord Somertown's malice to me; for I thought he had administered poison in my wine. I was mistaken—death was too merciful a doom to be awarded by the monster, to the man he hated; the drug was intended to render me inanimate, and, by suspending my powers, make me the easy victim of his deep-laid scheme. Too certain in its effects, I already felt the all-subduing influence creeping over my frame, and whilst horror and resentment struggled at my breast, my unnerved limbs trembled beneath

my weight, and almost refused to sustain me, whilst I listened to the sentence pronounced by my arch enemy.

“ ‘ Know,’ said he, in a voice trembling with rage and guilt, ‘ know, unhappy wretch, that I am acquainted with your origin ; yes, I am informed that you are the offspring of that proud beauty who scorned my proffered love, and of my detested rival, whose insidious arts made her forget her duty, and rendered her blind to the superior merit that sued for her affection. My father hated your parents, and I inherit his hatred with his title—your mother eluded my vengeance by death ; your father also escaped me, but their offspring is mine, and I shall have glorious revenge ; I see your senses are becoming torpid through the influence of the drug you

have swallowed, I will therefore hasten to inform you that you are doomed to live, but to exist in such a state of wretchedness that death would be a mercy—remember your misery flows from *me*: Oh! forget not that circumstance, or I have but half my vengeance; your wife too, my degenerate niece, who has dared to unite her fate to that of the enemy of her family shall have an equal portion of suffering—let that reflection gall you, and add to the anguish of perpetual slavery; the manner of her punishment I will not tell you, for suspence and doubt aggravate affliction of every kind; know this only, she shall *wed another*.’

“ The drug had begun its operation indeed, and a torpor not to be resisted was creeping over my whole frame, yet when Lord Somertown pronounced the last fatal words—

‘ she shall wed another,’ my expiring senses were awakened, and the fury that transported my soul inspired one last effort of strength ; I flew, and seized the collar of my insulting foe, but whilst I held him struggling in my grasp, he contrived to stamp with his foot, and several of his creatures came to his assistance. I was easily secured, for the short-lived energy had already subsided, and my stiffening limbs, and stupified senses overpowered me more than the united strength of the bravoës.

“ From this moment I remembered nothing more, until I found myself confined in a narrow inconvenient recess, which appeared intended for a bed ; but the cruel way in which my hands and feet were manacled, prevented me from stretching myself upon it so as to obtain any rest. Impenetrable darkness enveloped me,

but the constant splashing of water close to my head, convinced me that I was upon the sea, in some vessel, destined by my persecutor to convey me far from that happy land, where unjust imprisonment is forbidden by the laws.

“ At first I was at a loss to account for my wretched situation, but by degrees my recollection returned, and the dreadful truth flashed on my awakening senses. It is surprising to me at this moment that phrensy did not seal my wretchedness, for I remembered the dreadful words, ‘ she shall wed another ;’ and in the agony they excited, I attempted to tear off the manacles that confined me ; the effort I made was attended with so much noise, that it brought one of the ship’s crew to my little cabin.

“ ‘ What’s in the wind now ?’ exclaimed he in a rough tone, ‘ you had better be quiet my hearty ; you will

be worse off if you don't mind what you are about: and considering the crimes you have been guilty of, it is no great matter.'

" ' Crimes,' reiterated I, ' what crimes can possibly be laid to my charge, who never injured any one ?'

" ' You did not do what you wished to do,' replied the tar, ' but that was no thanks to you.'

" ' Tell me, I entreat you,' said I, ' of what am I accused ?'

" ' Oh, you have forgot it, have you ?' answered he, ' that's comical too, by jingo. Well then, I'll rub up your memory a bit. Don't you remember when you attempted to kill your uncle, Lord Somertown ?'

" ' *I attempt to kill Lord Somertown,*' interrupted I, ' Heavens what a falsehood; I never even dreamt of such a thing !'

" ' Why, as for that, you know

best,' replied the tar, ' but it argues very little now to deny it. I should think it rather unlikely such a thing should be invented of an innocent man; but the short and the long of it is, that your uncle says you did so, and out of compassion to you, and to save the disgrace of having you hanged, he had you conveyed on board our vessel, whilst you were dead drunk; for when you found your wicked intention was frustrated, you took a quantity of laudanum, in hopes to escape your deserts, but it was not enough to kill you, and as the affair was blowed, you must have been prosecuted if your good uncle had not sent you beyond seas. We shall land you as soon as we find a convenient place, for we don't want the company of murderers in the Blythe Betsey, I can assure you; but we

will take care it shall be where you are not likely to get away from again.'

“ The agony of my mind at this intelligence may easily be imagined. At first I gave way to despair, and vented my anguish in exclamations of sorrow; but recollecting how fruitless was such weakness, I determined to subdue it. Whilst life was spared me, escape was not impossible, and when I thought upon the cruel situation of my beloved Emily, it awakened such an ardent desire to rescue her, that it gave a supernatural strength to my mind, and supported me through the severest of trials.

“ As soon as my informer could be prevailed upon to listen to me, I told my plain unvarnished tale, and laid open, to the honest seaman, a train of iniquity, that shocked his simple

nature. He, who had been taught to hate me as a murderer, now pitied me as an oppressed victim of the blackest treachery.

“ He determined upon my deliverance, with all the ardour of increased benevolence, and unloosing the manacles that confined me, as a pledge of his future services, he bade me be of good cheer, for that he was certain his captain, who, though rough as the element he ploughed, was generous and humane, would scorn to be the implement of oppression in the hands of a tyrant, like Lord Somertown. He had been prevailed upon to take charge of me for a large reward, under the supposition that he was doing an act of mercy to a culprit, who merited death, by giving him a chance of living to repent his crimes, at the same time he was saving a noble fa-

mily from the stigma of being allied to a felon.

“ As soon therefore as my new friend, Jack Thomson, had repeated my melancholy story to him, and removed the prejudice that had hitherto kept him from speaking to me, I was ordered into his cabin, and received from Captain Armstrong the credit my narrative deserved. From that moment I was free, and treated with the same kindness as his chief mate, who was also his nephew. The generous Armstrong was, however, bound to the coast of Africa, and as I was eager, beyond expression, to return to England, that I might ascertain the fate of her who was dearer to me than my life, he kindly promised to put me on board the first vessel we should meet with, bound to my native shore. ‘ And when you get there, my friend,’ said

he, 'keep close under hatches, or hoist false colours to deceive the enemy, until Roger Armstrong returns to his moorings, then never fear but we will work him pretty tightly. Your testimony will argufy nothing without a witness; you had better therefore be mum until you can *jaw* him to some purpose.'

END OF VOLUME III.







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